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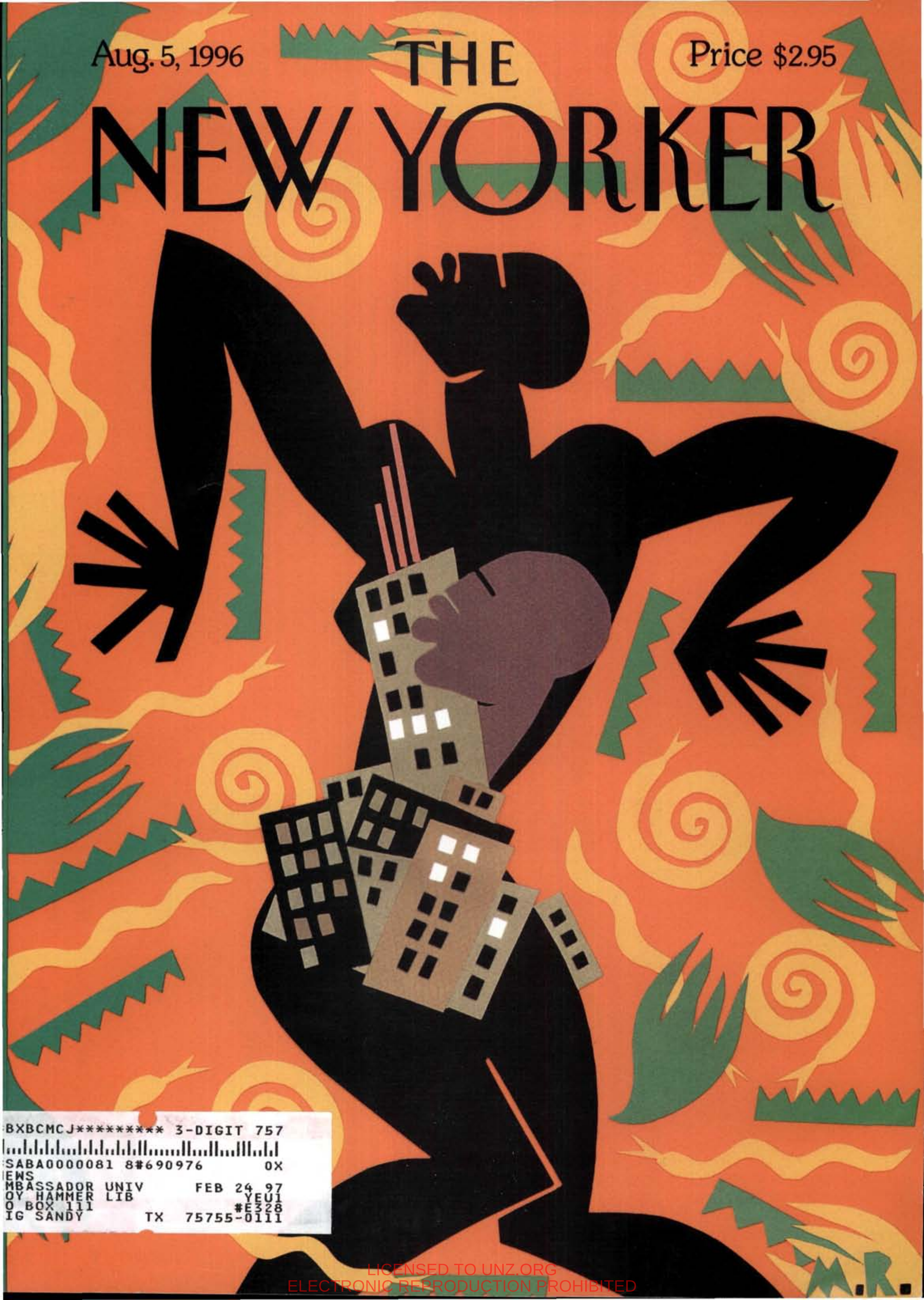

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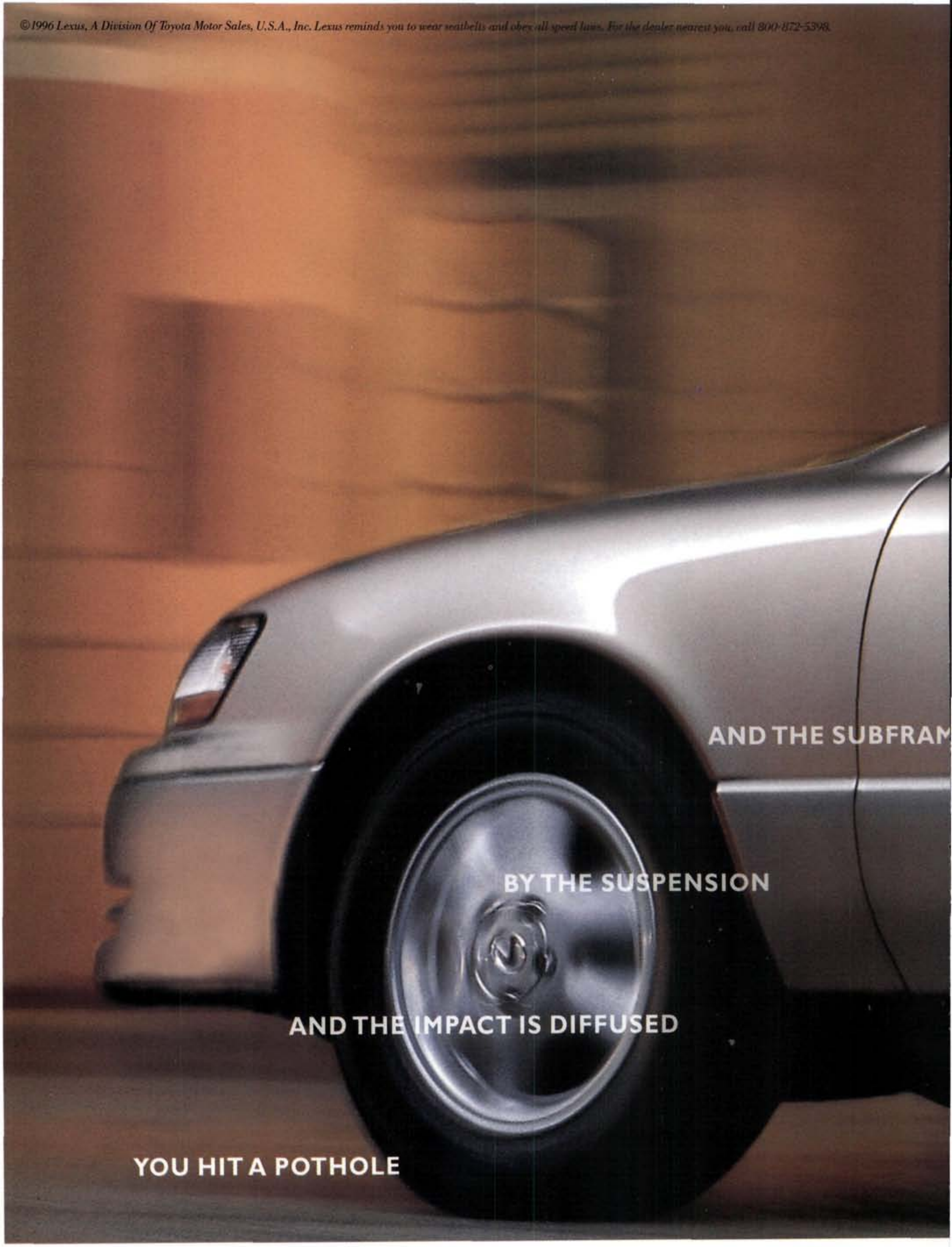
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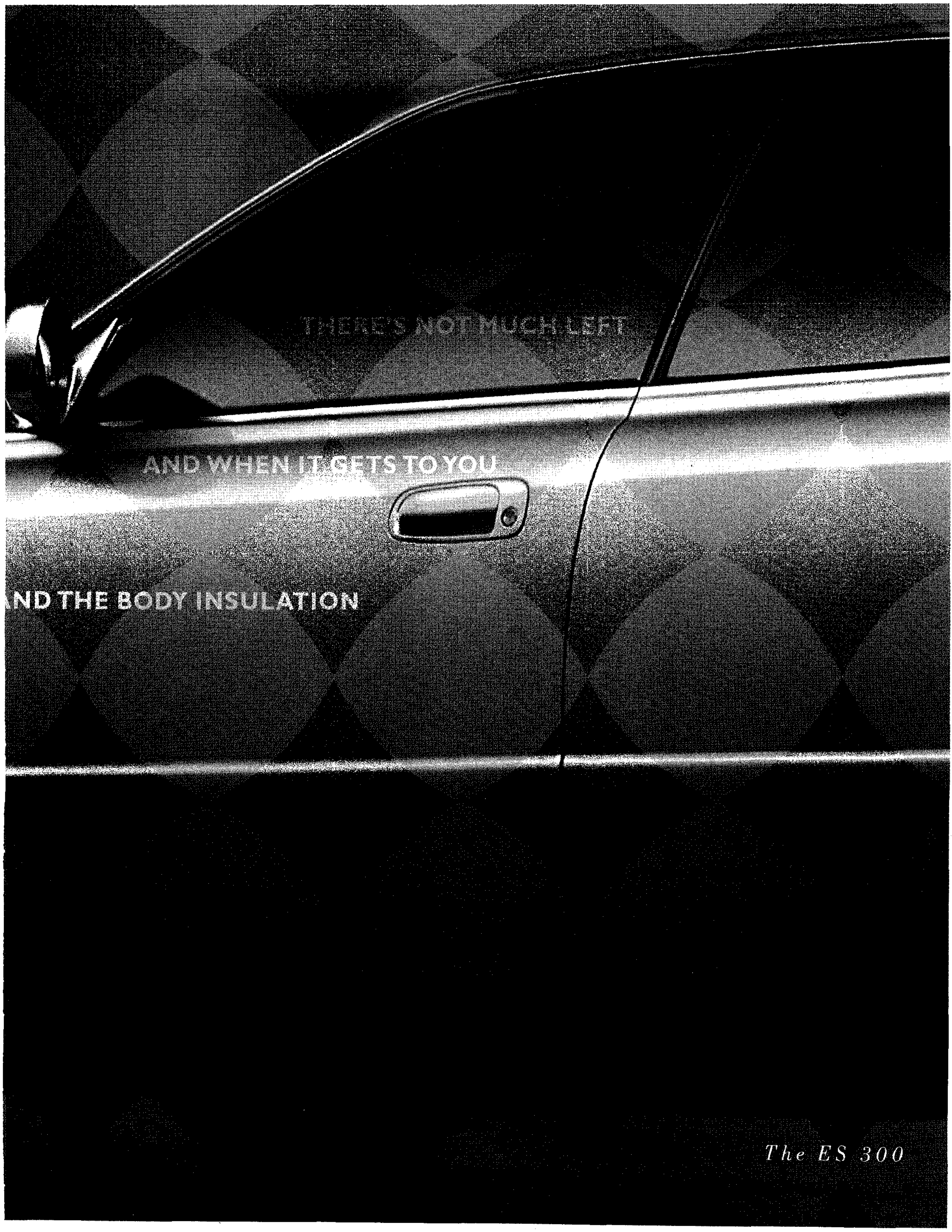
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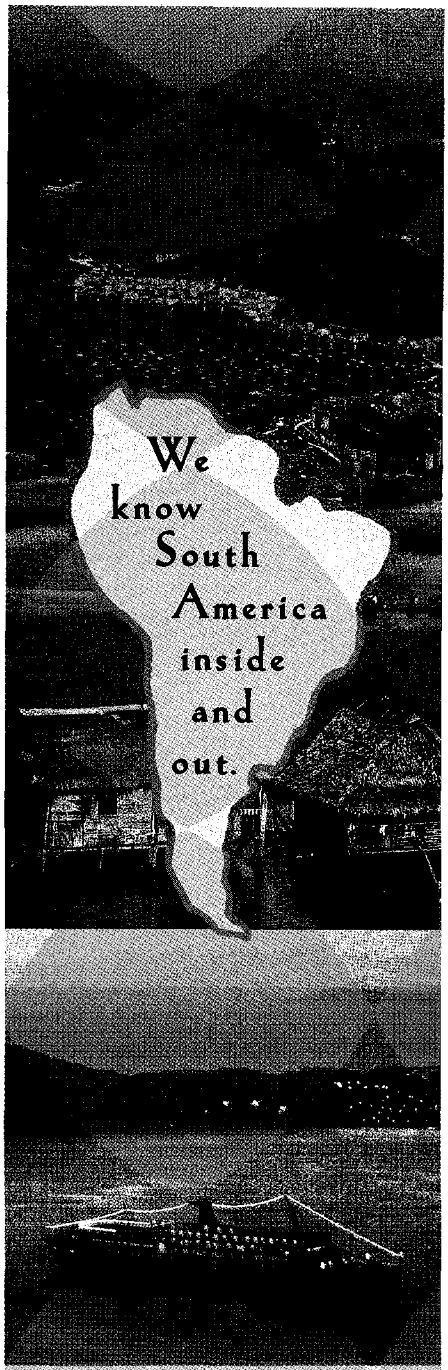

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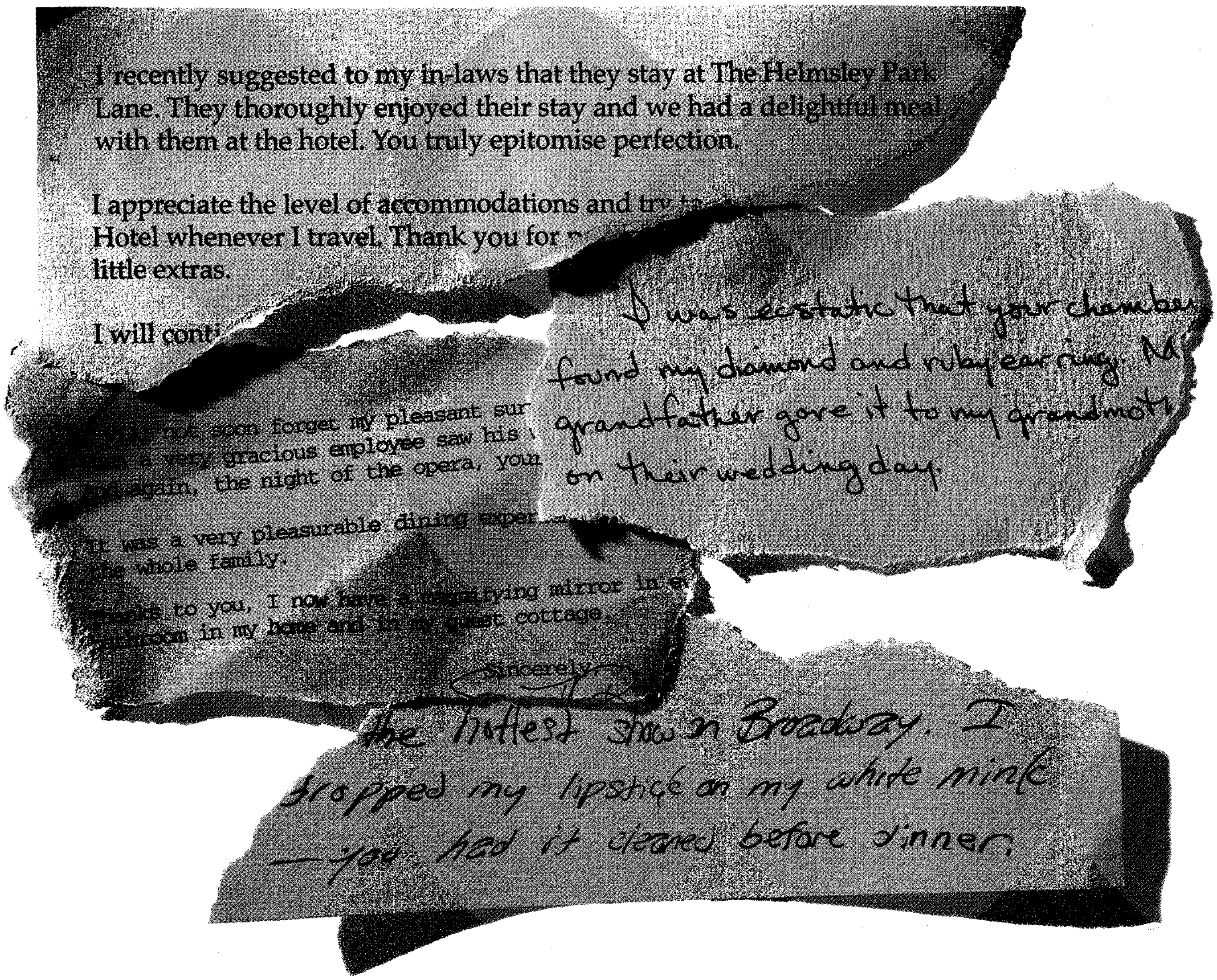

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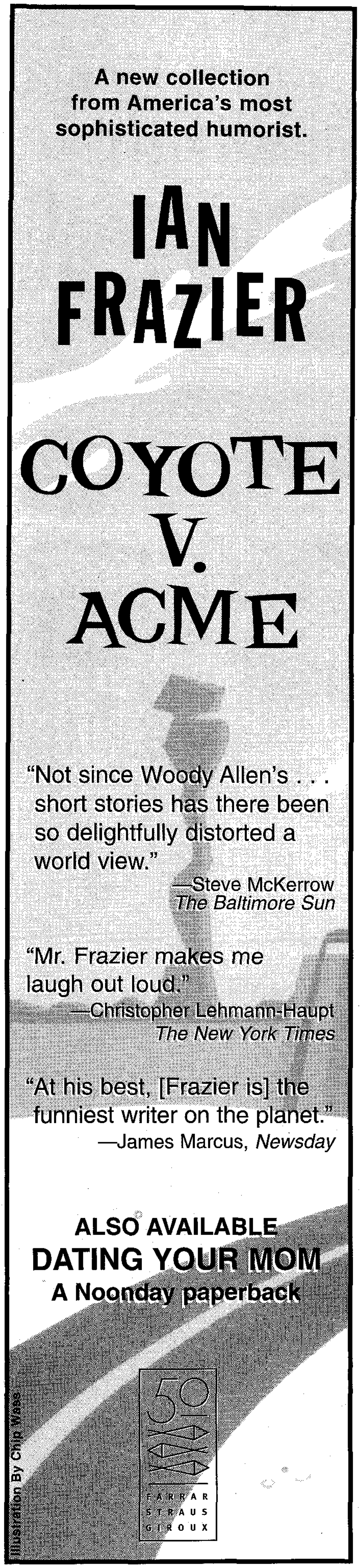
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COMMENT

GLITTERING PRIZE

Should New York go for the Olympic gold?

As a lot of television viewers are rediscovering right about now, the Olympics have a way of sneaking up on you. You try to resist—you reel before the boosterism, the hokum, and the hype—but before long you find yourself whispering encouragement and pumping your fist in the air. The Olympics are (for reasons David Remnick explains elsewhere in this issue) a darn good TV show. And among their charms is the fact that they're happening somewhere else.

Mature world capitals, secure in their grandeur, do not normally bid for the Olympic Games. That's for towns on the make—Atlanta, Barcelona, Seoul—not for a grown-up megalopolis like New York. Who needs the headaches? Why should we pander to the nabobs of the International Olympic Committee, waving placards and passing out brochures, just for the dubious honor of turning our city into a tacky theme park, building elephantine facilities destined to be mothballed after two weeks, and enduring horrific traffic jams and other logistical nightmares with a frozen grin on our civic face?

Nevertheless, the Olympics seem to be sneaking up on New York, or vice versa. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and important elements of the city's élite have already lent their support to the idea of (to use an expression New Yorkers will get heartily sick of over the next few years) going for the gold. A committee of businessmen has pledged a quarter-million dollars to begin a study of the feasibility of bringing the Olympics here in 2008, the next available opening. And the *Daily News* is already angling to be the Official Tabloid of the XXIX Olympiad: "LET'S LIGHT THE FLAME AND HOST THE GAMES," the paper headlined a recent editorial.

Of course the *News* would say that: it's owned by a real-estate developer, and real-estate developers like the prospect of building things. The Mayor, for his part, wants to keep the Yankees in town and is looking for a way to put a new stadium on Manhattan's West Side. What's surprising is that the Olympic bid also has support among civic and environmental leaders, and that a serious case can in fact be made for it. Daniel Doctoroff, the investment banker who is spearheading the campaign, argues that previous host cities have used the Games to make desperately needed investments in infrastructure: Atlanta passed a hundred-and-fifty-million-dollar bond issue to repair

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some of its sewers, among other things—a proposal the voters had rejected in the past. Tokyo made major improvements to its subway system. Every host city has upgraded its airport. According to Robert Kiley, the president of the New York City Partnership and Chamber of Commerce, the Games "may be a way to disgorge some of the myriad projects that have been locked in perpetual gridlock in New York City."

The conventional view that the Olympics are a financial sinkhole seems to be an anachronism. It's true that Montreal took a colossal bath on the 1976 Summer Games. But, starting with Los Angeles in 1984, Doctoroff argues, enormous increases in television and sponsorship revenue have transformed the economics of the Games. New York City, he thinks, could expect more than three billion dollars in direct revenue from the Games in 2008, plus billions more through tourism. The traffic problem is supposedly soluble: Los Angeles *reduced* traffic during its Games. And Doctoroff and others contend that the Games would improve the city's image (though Atlanta's bad press suggests otherwise).

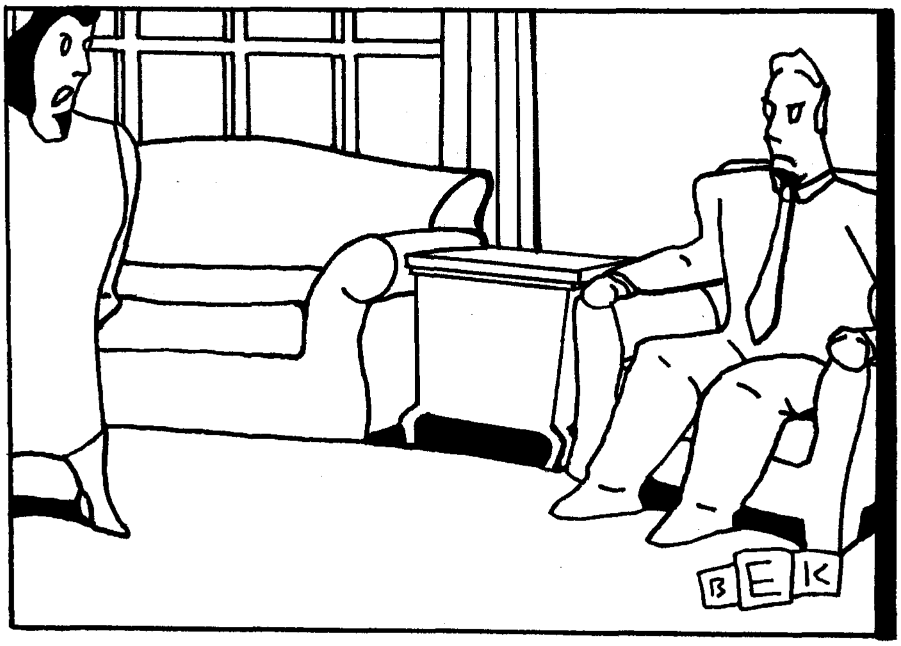
The most interesting argument for the Olympics is that they would focus New York's energies on its future. Ever since the debacle of Westway, fifteen years ago, New Yorkers have very publicly worried about whether they have the political will to undertake large-scale public works. The Olympics, which would require several dozen athletic facilities and housing for fifteen thousand people, might well provide the kind of nonpartisan and supra-political aegis under which contending parties could clasp hands. Tom Fox, the founding president of the Hudson River Park Conservancy, points out that the ruinous battle between developers and environmentalists has finally begun to subside, and he says that the Olympics "is the kind of event that could bring together the city and bring out the best."

It's easy to imagine an alignment of opinion in which going for the gold represents a commitment to a future of growth and change, while the casting of doubt looks like the usual defeatism and insularity. But the Olympics may simply be the wrong medicine. As a treatment for urban ills, the Olympics are at best an analgesic, not a cure. Economists long ago concluded that one-shot events produce a momentary spasm of growth but almost no lasting economic value. New York City tried something similar in 1964, when it put on a World's Fair; what we have to show for that, apart from a few modest road improvements, is some skeletal remains in a park in Queens—a pleasant but not especially useful ruin. In the case of the Olympics, even the short-term gain of tourism tends to be partly offset by natives decamping. Thomas Cunningham, a regional economist with the Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta, says, "The overall impact of the Games is quite marginal." Larry Kimbell, the director of the Forecasting Project of the University of California at Los Angeles, remembers the '84 Olympics as "a fine event for L.A.'s image," but adds that economically "it was the biggest nothing that ever happened."

New York does desperately need new capital investment; and it is a sign of the futility felt by New York's leading citizens that many of them are turning to the Olympics as the only way of making us do what we need to do. But the exigencies of the Olympics may force us to invest in the wrong things. On the West Side—a possible site—we need a greenway and road improvements, not a velodrome. We need to fix schools and bridges and streets all over town. We need to narrow, not widen, the gap between Manhattan and the outer boroughs. We need to improve the basic services that make businesses and people stay or come back. We need a lot of modest investments, not a few colossal ones.

And then there's the danger of what might be called the fantasy of the big score. The Olympics could well become our deus ex machina, the outside force that we imagine will solve our problems for us. Budget unbalanced? Olympic cash is on the way. Streets and parks deteriorating? Wait till the Olympics get here—we'll have to fix them. Pining for the Olympics is like hoping for an inheritance; or, as Mitchell Moss, the director of the Taub Urban Research Center at New York University, puts it, "It's the adult version of the drug ecstasy: you feel good because you don't know what you're doing."

The naïve reasons for opposing an Olympic bid are wrong, but so are the naïve reasons for supporting one. What makes thinking about the Games worthwhile, though, is that you can't do it without thinking about the city's future—and that is something we New Yorkers almost never do, so preoccupied are we with figuring out how to get through the day, or the month, or the year. New York may not need the Olympics, but it can certainly use the debate. —JAMES TRAUB



"Let's stop this before we both say a lot of things we mean."

IN THE MAIL

TRUE COLORS

Like Anatole Broyard, I am of New Orleans Creole descent, but, unlike him, I am not light-skinned enough to have had the option of pretending to be white ("White Like Me," Life and Letters, by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., June 17th). Nonetheless, as a writer I do struggle with American society's apparent inability to equate black with anything but—well, black. People both black and white relegate me to a certain aesthetic because of my ethnicity, in many cases without having seen my work at all. This only increases the pleasure I take in their confusion when they do read an essay or article I've written addressing human truths that, while often glimpsed through my prism of color, are certainly not bound by it. How unfortunate that Broyard felt that in order to be universal he had to erase himself.

ERIN AUBRY
Los Angeles, Calif.

Mr. Gates writes, "Some people speculated that the reason Broyard couldn't write his novel was that he was living it—that race loomed larger in his life because it was unacknowledged, that he couldn't put it behind him because he had put it beneath him." Perhaps, like Ralph Ellison, Broyard wanted to be not above but outside an identity that would formulate him. In many of his essays, Ellison lamented that his life both as a man and as a writer changed when Negroes began to be referred to as blacks. The late Charles Gordone, whose play "No Place to Be Somebody" won the Pulitzer Prize in 1970, dreamed of a multiracial American theatre but was written off by those who sought an agenda-fed black theatre. How much of Anatole Broyard's block—like Ellison's, Gordone's, and, for that matter, E. M. Forster's—can be assigned to fear of "incorrectness," to paranoia about daring to write against what was and is fashionable?

RICHARD H. COSTA
Sylvan Beach, N.Y.

In 1974, I took a course with Broyard at N.Y.U. At the time, Ralph Ellison was also teaching there, and Broyard frequently talked about Ellison's second novel, which he claimed to have read several times. One day, Broyard told us about a long description, in that novel, of a black man walking down a busy street in Harlem—every nuance of the man's walk was detailed. To help the class visualize Ellison's narration, Broyard did an imitation of the walk for us, showing how the man shuffled his feet, etc. After class, I commented to Broyard that his was the best imitation by a white man of a black man's walk that I'd ever seen. He acted quite pleased, and later bought me a beer.

JAMES SWAIN
Odessa, Fla.

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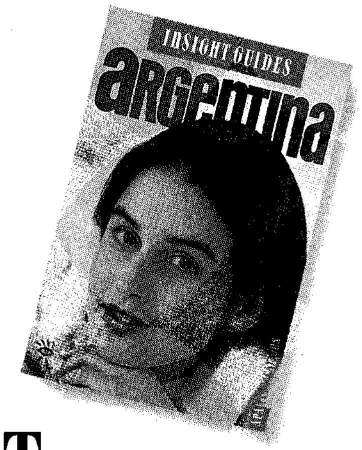

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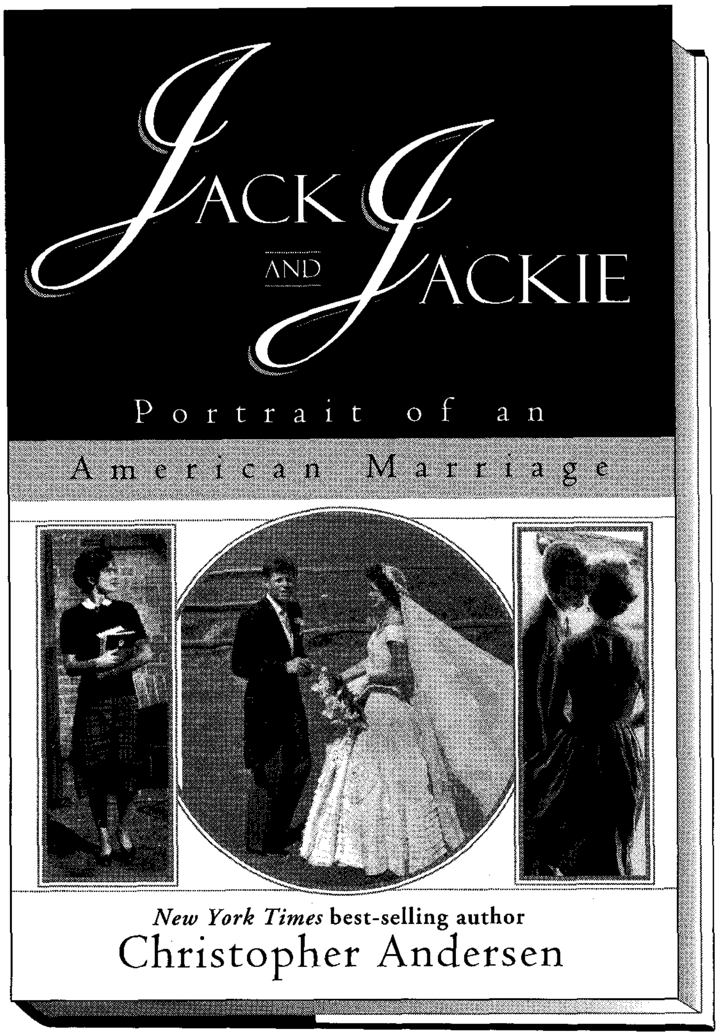
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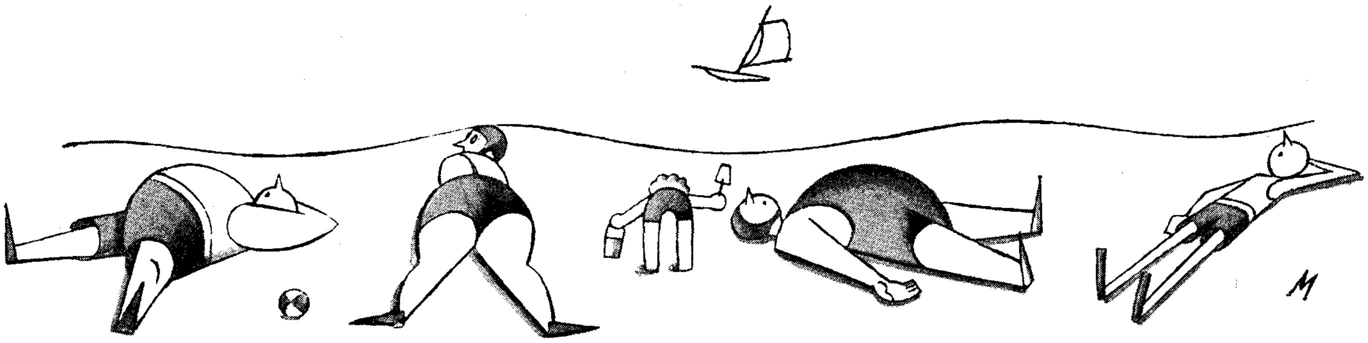

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Born to Sing!—Singers Lisa Fischer, Tanya Blount, and Stacy Francis, in a new R. & B.-and-gospel musical with book and lyrics by Vy Higginsen and Ken Wydro. Previews begin July 31. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

Getaway—The New Georges summer series of one-acts by emerging female playwrights begins Aug. 1 at 7:30 and continues, Thursdays through Sundays, through Aug. 18. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly—A cast of five performs more than fifteen musical numbers in a new revue conceived by lyricist and director Mark Waldrop and the late costume designer Howard Crabtree. Music by Dick Gallagher. Previews begin Aug. 1. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Hughie—Al Pacino stars as the blowhard gambler Erie Smith, in his own staging of Eugene O'Neill's 1941 drama. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—A revue tracing the ups and downs of courtship, with book and lyrics by Joe DiPietro and music by Jimmy Roberts. Directed by Joel Bishoff. Two previews on July 31. Opens Aug. 1 at 6:30. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

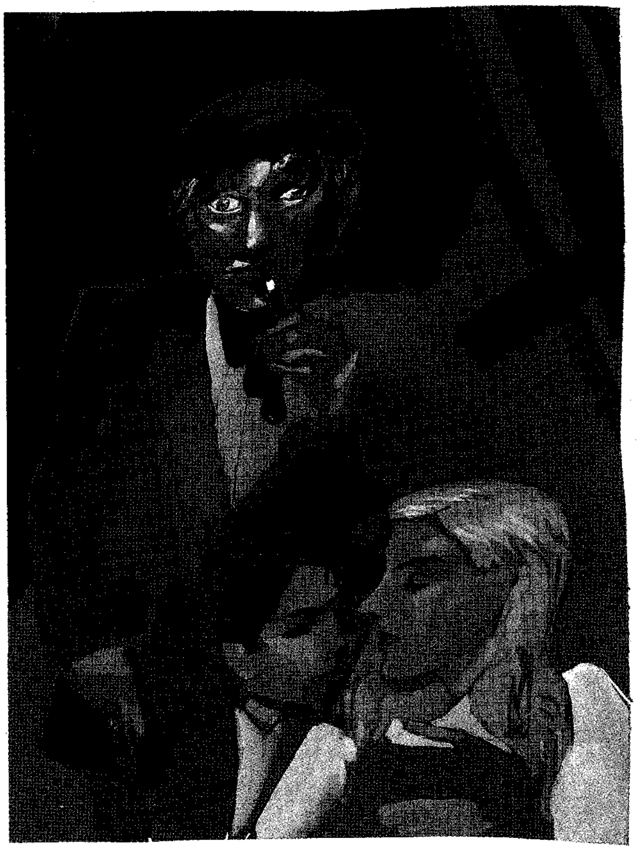
Love's Labour's Lost—The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's second and final offering of the summer. Previews continue through Aug. 1, in rotation with the company's current production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; opens Aug. 2 at 8. (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 1-914 265-9575.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Acts of Providence—Two one-acts by Edward Allan Baker: "Dead Man's Apartment," a comedy about a man who uses his lunch hour to fight with his mistress, and "Dolores," a drama about two sisters whose lives are affected by domestic violence. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820. Closes Aug. 11.)

American Style—Paul Boocock and David Latham have been performing together for three years as Premium Bob, the kind of aggressively intelligent and truly weird act you might have spotted on Letterman in the early eighties. In their new show, they forge a hilarious evening out of elements as incongruous as a writer obsessed with imagining the thoughts of the young Martin Luther and the American public's fascination with cosmetic depilation. Thursdays at 8, through Aug. 15. (Workhouse, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 431-9220.)

The Beckett Festival—Dublin's Gate Theatre is in town to present Samuel Beckett's complete works for the stage—nineteen plays in all—as part of the Lincoln Center Festival 96. Performances continue through Aug. 11. (Lincoln Center. For schedule information and tickets, call 721-6500.)



Brian Murray, Malcolm Adams, and Julia Gibson, in "Da."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Big—This adaptation of the movie that starred Tom Hanks and Elizabeth Perkins provides little joy, though Daniel Jenkins, as the twelve-year-old in a grownup's body, is sweet and likable. Directed by Mike Ockrent. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/27/96.) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Boys in the Band—James Lecesne, as the swishy Emory, and David Greenspan, as the lethal Harold, have a field day in Mart Crowley's study of gay self-hatred. The script no longer seems particularly shocking (except in its viciousness) or politically suspect, but it holds up soundly in this impressive revival, which was supervised by the playwright and directed with buckets of bile by Kenneth Elliott. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Aug. 3.)

Bring In da Noise, Bring In da Funk—In director George C. Wolfe and dancer-choreographer Savion Glover's heroically energetic musical, the extraordinary Glover and his sensational group of young tap dancers and street drummers bring joy. They bring fury. They bring history and ecstasy. (5/20/96) (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

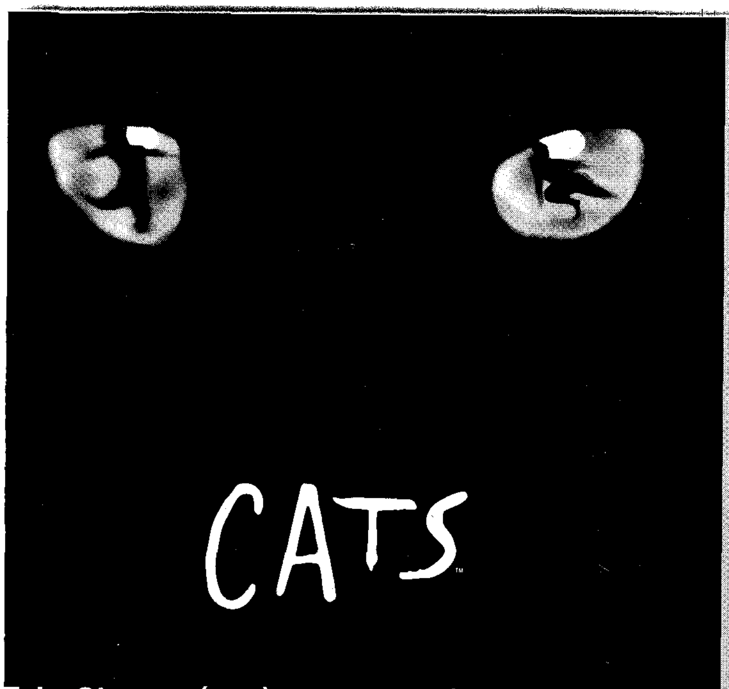
Chicago City Limits—The improv company takes aim at the 1996 Presidential campaign with a new revue, "Right to Laugh Party." (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

The Cocoanuts—The American Jewish Theatre's production of the Irving Berlin–George S. Kaufman musical (which starred the Marx Brothers in 1925). (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

Cowgirls—An appealing, if somewhat predictable, musical comedy, in which three chamber musicians are transformed into fringe-wearin', honky-tonkin' cowgirls. Mary Murfitt, the show's composer and lyricist, and Betsy Howie, who wrote the book, are part of the fine cast. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Da—In the Irish playwright Hugh Leonard's 1978 memory play, the middle-aged Charlie (Ciaran O'Reilly) reconsiders his tangled relationship with his recently deceased father (Brian Murray), who continues to banter with him from the beyond. Murray gives a typically wonderful performance as the title character, whose blithe approach to his life has led both his wife (Aideen O'Kelly) and his son to blame him for their own disappointments. Charlie, speaking to his younger self (played with appealing vulnerability by Malcolm Adams), distills his regret for this into a single line: "It was a long time before I learned that love turned upside down is still love for all that." Charlotte Moore's assured staging doesn't shy away from the sorrow in Leonard's comedy, and the other members of the first-rate cast—Paddy Croft, Julia Gibson, John Leighton, and Paul Mc Grane—shift effortlessly between the past and the present. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

A Delicate Balance—Decorous suburban ennui is transformed into real angst in this bracing, astringent revival of Edward Albee's 1966 play about a family that has sacrificed much of its humanity for the sake of appearances. The cast, under the fine direction of Gerald Gutierrez, is uniformly excellent. (5/27/96) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)



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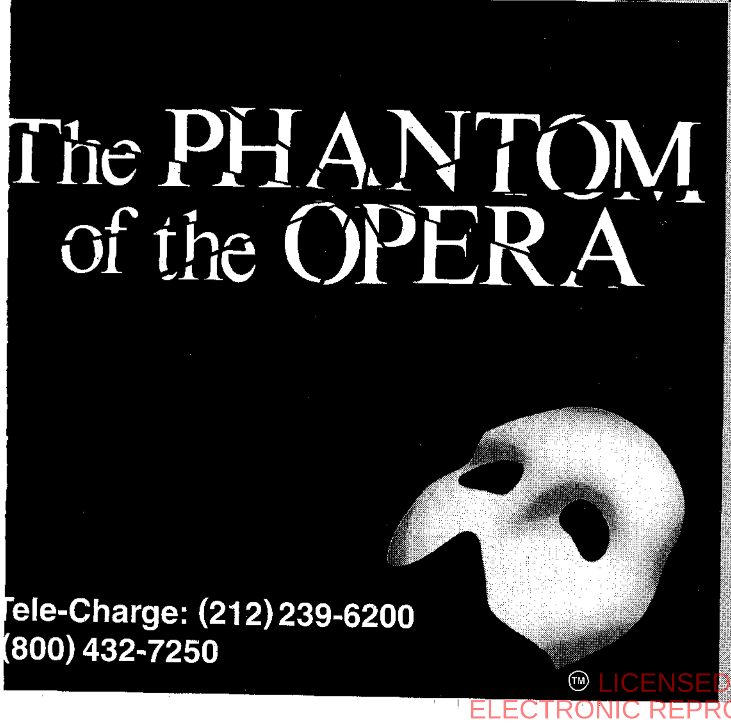
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Forbidden Hollywood—Gerard Alessandrini's hit-and-miss movie-biz sendup. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum—Burt Shevelove, Larry Gelbart, and Stephen Sondheim's 1962 musical-comedy version of a Roman farce is a joke play that begs for outrageousness, but Jerry Zaks's peppy, acrylic revival seldom enters that giddy zone of comic daring. (5/20/96) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Grace & Glorie—Estelle Parsons plays a ninety-year-old illiterate mountain woman whose last days are interrupted by a well-meaning hospice volunteer (Lucie Arnaz) who has an M.B.A. from Harvard and has moved to Virginia to escape her own tragedy. Tom Ziegler's tale is utterly predictable but charmingly told, and under Gloria Muzio's direction the performances of the two actresses make the blend of humor and pathos affecting rather than cloying. Parsons captures the spirit of the play when she wears makeup for the first time: her smile is a perfect combination of mischievous pleasure at her appearance and serene lack of regret that she hasn't had such benefits before. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-9393.)

An Ideal Husband—In Oscar Wilde's hundred-and-one-year-old play, a youthful transgression comes back to threaten the career of a promising Cabinet member. The man who saves the day is played, with showy aplomb, by Martin Shaw. The rest of the delightful, mostly British cast, under the direction of Peter Hall, is well up to the Wildean wit and wisdom, and the evening flies by in a flash of epigrammatic splendor. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Jasper in Gramercy Park—Cordis Heard and James Hallett are (it appears) a long-married couple who are rather obsessed with their dog and his bowel movements. Their talk about him occasionally prompts memories of other events—a near-rape, a drought—which they recall in precise detail. But the playwright, Mary Mitchell, has smothered whatever sense any of this might make by setting the play in, as she describes it, "the present, past, the infinite and the future" and by interspersing her short scenes with increasingly melodramatic film clips of a dog. That Heard and Hallett nonetheless manage to create a portrait of two memorable, charming characters in a loving, if odd, marriage is a testament to their skills. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 598-2385.)

The King and I—In a word, magnificent. Hats off to Donna Murphy, as Anna, Lou Diamond Phillips, as the King of Siam, and everyone else (including Rodgers and Hammerstein, of course) who had a hand in this production. Christopher Renshaw directed. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Love Thy Neighbor—In his latest two-hour monologue, Jackie Mason prowls the stage like a rabid penguin, parcelling out tough love with equal-opportunity glee. His range may be limited, but his timing is perfect, and the house rocks with laughter. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Making Porn—Rex Chandler has the role of the straight star Jack Hawk in Ronnie Larsen's play about the gay-porn business. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200.)

Mean Rich White Ladies—An adaptation by the Hangdog Theatre of Clare Boothe Luce's 1936 play, "The Women," directed by Robert Cucuzza. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes Aug. 10.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—The Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival production, directed by Terrence O'Brien, runs in repertory with preview performances of "Love's Labour's Lost." (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 1-914 265-9575. Closes Aug. 4.)

Orestes: I Murdered My Mother—Jeff Cohen's updating of the Euripides play, in which the tabloid press takes a crack at the matricide and his sister Electra. (One Dream, 232 West Broadway. 279-4200.)

Phaedra—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company presents Everett Quinton in a one-man Greek tragicomedy, about the queen who fell for her stepson. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 307-4100.)

Rent—The late Jonathan Larson's rock opera, inspired by Puccini's "La Bohème," stands every assumption of the traditional musical on its head. It can't support the narrative overload (eight separate stories are told), yet by the end of the evening Larson's talent has taken the audience to places the musical never ventures these days. Directed by Michael Greif. (2/19/96) (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.)

Seven Guitars—August Wilson's exciting new play flashes back to the final days of a Pittsburgh blues singer (Keith David). The seven guitars of the title are the seven memorable characters whose high times and dashed dreams Wilson turns into beautiful, complex music—a funky, wailing, irresistible Chicago blues. Lloyd Richards is the director. (4/15/96) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You—Christopher Durang's 1979 comedy, starring Geraldine Librandi and directed by Mark Cannistraro. Saturdays at 8. (Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. S. 255-5438.)

A Thousand Clowns—The Roundabout Theatre's revival of Herb Gardner's 1962 comedy captures the era so nicely that you almost fail to notice that both Judd Hirsch (who played the same role thirty-two years ago) and many of the issues in the play are now somewhat dated. The jokes are still funny, and the star is still likable as Murray Burns, the eccentric who quits his job writing for the detestable "Chuckles the Chipmunk" show with no other means of supporting his twelve-year-old wunderkind nephew (played precociously but not preciously, and with great eyebrow action, by Dov Tiefenbach). David Margulies, Jim Fyfe, and Marin Hinkle are all just right in supporting roles, but it's John Procaccino, as Chuckles the Chipmunk, who steals the show. Directed by Scott Ellis. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Aug. 10.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **MASTER CLASS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **VICTOR/VICTORIA:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

DANCE

"Ocean"—Merce Cunningham's epic is, in essence, the final collaboration between the choreographer and his longtime musical adviser, John Cage, who was for years steeped in the works of James Joyce. Cage died in 1992, leaving behind suggestions for many aspects of the piece, including the title, which he thought Joyce would have used for his next book. Indeed, you can think of "Ocean" as a terpsichorean "Ulysses," filled with allusions that are grand in scale yet intimate in effect. Exactly ninety minutes long and calibrated to the second, the work is uniquely—and perfectly—a dance without front, back, or sides: from wherever you watch on its periphery, you get the complete experience. ("Now all my dances look flat to me," Cunningham remarked in 1994, on the night that "Ocean" premièred, in Brussels.) The music—conceived, as always in pieces by Cunningham and Cage, apart from the dance—incorporates two simultaneous scores: one, by David Tudor, is electronic; the other, by Andrew Culver, calls for a hundred and twelve musicians, arranged in a circle behind the audience. An outdoor theatre-in-the-round is being constructed especially for these performances. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. 721-6500. July 30-Aug. 4 at 9:30.)

Bahia Ballet—The former Balé Teatro Castro Alves, from the Brazilian state of Bahia, returns with two interpretations of Afro-Brazilian traditions: "Orixá," which likens the deities of the candomblé religion to natural forces, and "Berimbau," which draws its movements from capoeira, the native martial-arts form. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. July 30-Aug. 2 at 8 and Aug. 3 at 2 and 8.)

Central Park SummerStage—David Dorfman performs two duets—"Horn," with Dan Froot, and "Menne awn Fraen" (Yiddish for "Men Without Women") with Stuart Pimsler—then joins his company in "Skydown" and "Kilter." (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. Aug. 2 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

TERRY McELROY

"Ancestral Earths"—The Forces of Nature Dance Company and the Silver Cloud Native American Dancers & Musicians appear together in a full-length work by the choreographer Abdel Salaam. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. Aug. 2 at 8.)

Amy Pivar Dances—Aug. 1 at 7: The former Bill T. Jones dancer throws open the doors of Brooklyn's Prospect Park Picnic House for rehearsals of "Abandoned" and "Not a Confession" and a workshop with her collaborators. . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 8: Ms. Pivar performs the two pieces in question, at the Prospect Park Bandshell. (No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—July 30 at 7, Aug. 1-2 at 8, Aug. 3 at 5, and Aug. 4 at 7: David Gordon/Pick-Up Performance Co. . . . ¶ July 30-Aug. 2 at 8:30 and Aug. 3 at 2 and 8:30: Miami City Ballet. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Steve Miller—He's a joker, he's a smoker, he's a midnight toker, and he's the walking definition of "classic rock." Miller started out as your basic late-sixties, hippie-trippy San Francisco blues-rock guitarist. Then came "Fly Like an Eagle," "Jungle Love," and all those other seventies hits that stole into the Top Ten and our collective unconscious. With the indefatigable Pat Benatar. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. July 31 at 8.)

Hootie and the Blowfish—While the production is crisp and Darius Rucker's singing has a sufficient measure of urgency, much of the Hootie phenomenon can be attributed to sheer averageness: the band sounds like a bunch of friendly frat boys whooping it up on the quad. "Fairweather Johnson," their follow-up to the astronomically successful "Cracked Rear View" (fourteen million units and still going strong), offers another dose of the Rock 101 that turned them into a Capraesque bar-band-makes-good tale. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. July 31 at 8. . . . ¶ Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 3-4 at 8.)

AC/DC—Though they're probably best known for "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap" (1977)—made with the group's original vocalist, Bon Scott, who later died from alcohol poisoning—this deceptively infantile Australian band has more than two decades of experience behind it, and one record, "Back in Black" (1980), that ranks among the finest (and most heavily sampled) in rock history. Much of its success can be attributed to the imagination of guitarist Angus Young, a grinning homunculus who performs dressed as an English schoolboy and has the troublesome habit of mooning the audience. Never really heavy-metal, AC/DC is closer in spirit to the streamlined blues-based rock bands of the seventies. Live, the group delivers a visceral, blissfully inane show. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 1 at 8.)

Everything but the Girl—Fourteen years and several fine albums after singer Tracey Thorn and multi-instrumentalist Ben Watt first met in college, this stylish duo finally hit its stride with "Amplified Heart" (1994), a fantastic piece of work that, thanks to a clubby remix of "Missing," is still enjoying an extended run on the charts. With serious nods to hip-hop, jungle, and Burt Bacharach, their excellent new "Walking Wounded" offers a classy rose-petal take on the music that's often sneeringly referred to as dance pop. Their wistfulness may put some listeners to sleep, but ever so gently, like a perfectly mixed Martini. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Aug. 1 at 8.)

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan—Regarded by some as the world's greatest living singer, and certainly the king of the world-music scene, Ali Khan can claim among his many fans Michael Jackson, Joan Osborne, who recently studied with him, and Peter Gabriel, whose Real World label distributes the best of his hundred-odd albums. (In Pakistan, Ali Khan bootlegs are traded with a fervor that would make Bruce Springsteen blush.) You may have heard his voice on the soundtracks of "The Last Temptation of Christ," "Natural Born Killers," and, most effectively, "Dead Man Walking." A practitioner of the Sufi devotional vocal art known as *qawwali*, which literally means "utterance," he is a mountain of a man who performs with his ten-piece "party," all of whom play sitting down. And a party it is. As the band churns out a burbling harmonium-and-tabla drone, the singer unleashes a torrent of melisma and ululation which seems to come from another world. Then, as the music grows louder and his ecstatic, serpentine phrases soar, he reaches a hand to the heavens, and a shower of dollar bills rains down on the stage from the audience. With Donovan. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Aug. 1 at 8.)

Mutabaruka—One of reggae's prime poets, Mutabaruka fuses political issues with witty, slightly mad homilies rendered over engaging arrangements. (He recently released an entertaining compendium, "The Ultimate Collection," spanning more than a decade of his work.) He is blessed with an authoritative, conversational voice, and the shock of white hair smack-dab in the center of his dreadlocked dome makes him an imposing figure onstage. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. Aug. 1 at 8:30.)

TABLES FOR TWO

Barney Greengrass, 541 Amsterdam Ave., at 86th St. (724-4707)—The cuisine at this Upper West Side delicatessen is one of the greatest gifts Jewish culture has brought to mankind since the Ten Commandments, so nobody seems to care much about the décor. (Call it early-twentieth-century barbershop.) In a scene near the end of "Operation Shylock," Philip Roth describes the place (without naming it) better than we could, but he fails to note the handsome portrait of its founder, who established the restaurant in then-Jewish Harlem in 1908 and moved it to its current location in 1929, and whose son Moe and grandson Gary now run the place. If you go on a slow day, Moe, who wears a Society of American Magicians wristwatch, will do card tricks for you at the register.

Served by efficient waiters dressed like fishmongers, who clearly would rather eat glass than waste their time cooing at the customers, the powerfully appetizing food is the culinary equivalent of a slap—but a slap you *like*. When it arrives, everyone at the table falls silent, covertly staking out claims. Bagels and olives and slices of onion and truly good tomato accompany large platters paved with pink to white shades of exquisite fish flesh: salmon, sable, whitefish, and, of course, the royal sturgeon. You might want to start with smoked trout or a tonic glass of cold borscht, strained and laced with sour cream. Go ahead and try the heavenly chopped liver on rye, or the other meat sandwiches—but remember that Barney didn't get named the Sturgeon King for his pastrami. There are really only two bones to pick with Barney Greengrass: the long line on weekends and the unconscionably early hour that the restaurant closes. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 8:45-4; Saturdays and Sundays, 8:45-5. Sandwiches from $5, fish platters from $15.)

Scorpions / Alice Cooper—An evening of metal and makeup by the shore. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 2 at 8.)

Nona Hendryx / Sepia—Hendryx's name should be on any list of the great singer-songwriters. As a member of the seventies trio Labelle, she wrote the bulk of the group's material, which was edgy, provocative, political, and full of double entendres and empowering messages. Her solo efforts since Labelle's breakup, in 1976, have been equally challenging, from heavy metal ("Nona Hendryx," 1977) to New Age ("Skin Diver," 1989), with some fruitful collaborations (with Material, Arthur Baker, and Talking Heads) sandwiched in between. Live, she's regal, buff, and ready to bare her psyche. The two-man-two-woman vocal quartet Sepia will open for her. Their début disk, "Absence of Pain," is a harmonic marvel—jazz-inflected message music done with verve and intelligence. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Brooklyn. Aug. 3 at 7.)

Tracy Chapman / Charlie Hunter—It's been seven years since "Fast Car" turned this earnest folksinger into an overnight sensation; that damn car must be the bane of her existence. Nevertheless, she continues to make records: "New Beginning" is her latest, and it features "Give Me One Reason," her first hit since "Fast Car." / Thanks to his custom-built eight-string guitar and a few choice effects, Charlie Hunter can save himself the expense of a bassist and an organ player. But while it's a kick to hear this young talent create sounds last heard in the mid-sixties (on, say, a Big John Patton organ-trio disk), the only way he's ever going to transcend novelty is to stop jamming and get down to some serious compositional business. (Central Park SummerStage. Tickets are required for this event. For information, call 307-7171. Aug. 5 at 7.)

Meat Loaf—Perhaps the most telling moment on Meat Loaf's frighteningly successful "Bat Out of Hell II"—the cryogenically unoriginal 1995 follow-up to his 1977 multiplatinum opus—comes on a track titled "Everything Louder Than Everything Else," when he bellows this startling summation of his affinities: "If you want my views of history, then there's something you should know. / The three men I admire most are Curly, Larry, and Moe!" Of course, most of the credit for this gargoyle of an album should go to the singer's once-estranged Caligari, Jim Steinman, who wrote and produced both records. As for Meat Loaf's concert demeanor, the best you can say is that for a somnambulist he sure does sweat a lot. (Radio City Music Hall. Aug. 6 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Aug. 1: **ALLEN TOUSSAINT.** He's been a major force on the New Orleans music scene, writing great songs for great performers, for five decades. Etta James, Dr. John, Irma Thomas, and the Neville Brothers have all recorded his work. An understated singer and an excellent pianist with a driving, rhythmic style, Toussaint has a gumbo elegance that leaves audiences enraptured.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Aug. 2-3: The **KINSEY REPORT.** The family that plays together and stays together: patriarch Lester (Big Daddy) Kinsey teams up with his three sons' band, the Kinsey Report, for an evening of soulful, down-home blues. Lead guitarist Donald Kinsey used to bill himself as "B.B. King, Jr.," and he's so good that the real B.B. never seemed to mind.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—July 31: **PAUL WESTERBERG.** Considering all the adolescent-angst-ridden alternative-rock groups that the Replacements helped launch, perhaps the most important thing that can be said about their former leader's wonderful new solo record, "Eventually," is that it's the work of a bona-fide adult. "A good day is any day that you're alive," he sings in a sober (but still defiant) voice; if young hellions can pick up on what he's saying, perhaps there's still hope for rock and roll after all. Worship Satan with **SLAYER** Aug. 5-6.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Aug. 2-3: **BETTIE SERVEERT.** This quartet from Amsterdam (the name is Dutch for "Betty serves," a reference to some long-forgotten tennis legend) plays deeply satisfying garage rock with a lean, let's-make-a-record-in-a-day sound. It's a sunny alternative to a lot of overproduced American grunge.

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—**FREEDY JOHNSTON** (July 31) has a knack for churning out exacting folk-rock with a convincing Midwestern twang; his songs bristle with careful detail and piercing language. His mostly perfect "This Perfect World" captured a misshapen planet inhabited by broken folks pushed to desperate measures. He should know: he sold the family farm to support his career, an experience chronicled on his superior 1992 record, "Can You Fly" (which began with the line "Well, I sold the dirt to feed the band").

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **DIANA KRALL** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. A witty singer and insouciant pianist, Krall is just a whisper from true maturity. Having studied with the late Jimmy Rowles, she makes growing up in public a wonder to behold. Dining.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Aug. 2-3: the **WINNARD HARPER** quartet. Harper was the drum-playing sibling in the Harper Brothers, one of the first neo-traditional jazz bands to gain attention. Now a veteran, he's sure to have some eager young players on the bandstand looking for wisdom and direction. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Aug. 4: the **HORACE SILVER** septet and **RAY BARRETTO & NEW WORLD SPIRIT.** Hard bop, as it's played by many of today's young windbags, can be a self-indulgent bore. Don't blame it on Silver. In the fifties, when this pianist practically invented the genre, he led a series of superbly calibrated groups that balanced memorable compositions, scrupulous arrangements, and pointed solos with a groove that swung like a twister. He still knows how to assemble a killer outfit and write a catchy tune, and his playing is as distinctive as ever. Ray Barretto is a musician for all seasons. His neo-salsa bands invariably have the New York mix in just the right proportions: two pinches of Latin, one pinch of jazz, and a smidgen of funk. **GATO BARBIERI** takes over on Aug. 6. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Aug. 3: Lite jazz with **JEFF LORBER.** Dining.

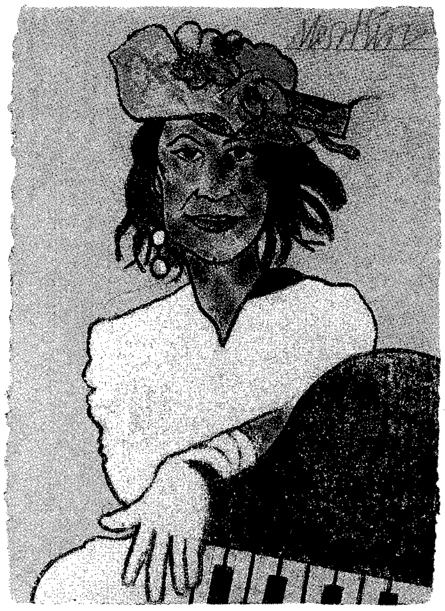
IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Aug. 4: the **JOHN PIZZARELLI** trio. An agile musician and a pleasant low-key crooner from the Chet Baker/Alfalfa school, Pizzarelli has one of the best-sounding cabaret acts in town. Starting Aug. 6: the **ART FARMER** sextet. Farmer's work on the flugelhorn proves that precision has its place even in jazz's spontaneous and emotional universe. By picking the perfect notes and playing them with a burnished elegance, Farmer makes virtues of control and calculation. His sophisticated, ardent playing distills bop down to a purely lyrical state. Dining.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Through Aug. 3: Woodstock veteran **RICHIE HAVENS.** Closed Mondays.

SMALLS, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—Is **VALERY PONOMAREV** (Aug. 2-3) the greatest hard-bop trumpeter to emerge from Russia, or are there other nascent Lee Morgans somewhere on the steppes? Only time will tell.

S.O.B.'S, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Aug. 5: **EDDIE PALMIERI.** His fervent hard-bop and salsa-inflected rhythms don't always translate onstage, where the cigar-chomping pianist tends to grandstand—but when the pieces do fall together, it's a smoker. Dining.

ALLEN TOWN: *It once seemed as though Geri Allen might spend her career flitting from style to style, but on her last two records, "Maroons" (1992) and "Twenty One" (1994), she began to concentrate on what she does best: banging the stuffing out of her instrument in a standard trio setting. Her tough-minded playing can veer from dark introspection to ferocious, extroverted swing; her solid compositions regularly summon up major figures of the Swing Era and of the sixties, fully digested and personally refracted. That history-soaked vocabulary is probably what won her a role in Robert Altman's upcoming "Kansas City"; in any case, she seems to have finally settled into the role of first lady of mainstream jazz piano. You can hear her at the Village Vanguard starting Aug. 6.*



RICHARD MERKIN

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Aug. 4: **REGGIE WORKMAN.** This bassist's late-career upswing is one of the more heartening tales of this too-safe decade. For a while it looked as if he'd wind up with little more than an honorable mention for his fine sixties work with Art Blakey and John Coltrane. As it turned out, his best years were in front of him. Workman has recently made a series of terrific recordings that rope together such perennial upstarts as Andrew Hill, Paul Bley, and Sam Rivers. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—**JIMMY SCOTT** swings into this legendary tourist haven starting Aug. 6. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Aug. 4: the **LOU DONALDSON** quartet. With one foot in well-turned bop soil and the other in R. & B. territory, Donaldson, an alto saxophonist, pledges allegiance to both virtuosity and entertainment. He's got the credentials (he was a first-edition member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, playing alongside Clifford Brown), and his timing—both as a bop soloist and as a comic—has never been better. **GERI ALLEN** grabs a handful of keys starting Aug. 6. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Aug. 3: **JUNIOR MANCE, JOE TEMPERLEY,** and **CALVIN HILL.** As a working trio, Mance (piano), Temperely (sax), and Hill (bass) operate in a zone that's the envy of many more-visible luminaries. When you reach their level of inspired professionalism, jazz stardom should be yours. Dining.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Winslow Homer," a comprehensive survey of the painter's career, comprising nearly two hundred paintings, watercolors, and drawings. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "Toulouse-Lautrec." After the successes of its Rembrandt and Goya exhibitions, the museum now attempts to pull off another homegrown blockbuster with its Toulouse-Lautrec holdings. The result is highly entertaining, but it lacks the breadth and authority of its predecessors. The Met's collection consists almost entirely of Lautrec's graphic works on theatrical subjects, including many of the brilliantly designed posters and evocative lithographs that number among the artist's most important works. But the museum has only a handful of his paintings and drawings, and minor ones at that—a situation that creates a rather lopsided view of his career. Inevitably, there is a video gallery, which presents a *très gai* clip from Jean Renoir's film "French Cancan." Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ "Ancient Art from the Shumei Family Collection." A grab bag of antiquities with no theme beyond excellence—and that's good enough. The Shumei Family is a spiritual organization with a strong aesthetic emphasis which is building a mountaintop museum in Japan designed by I. M. Pei. The objects on loan range from exquisitely wrought gold vessels from third-millenium-B.C. Persia to remarkably fresh Roman garden frescoes to exuberantly painted Islamic ceramics. According to the founder of the Shumei, "Unless you make others happy, you can never be happy yourself"; this exhibition should bring felicity to everyone connected with it. Through Sept. 1. . . . ¶ "Picturing Paradise: Colonial Photography of Samoa, 1875-1925." Portraits and landscapes in a variety of formats, including albums, postcards, stereographs, and photogravures. Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ "Art of the Deccani Sultans." Through Aug. 25. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open (weather permitting), with sculptures by Rodin, Lachaise, Lipchitz, Caro, Smith (David), and Smith (Tony). (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"From Bauhaus to Pop: Masterworks Given by Philip Johnson." Through Sept. 3. . . . ¶ "Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation" includes a hundred and thirty paintings, and nearly as many works on paper, depicting lovers, wives, poets, art dealers, and children. Through Sept. 17. . . . ¶ "Pictures of the Times: A Century of Prints from the New York *Times.*" Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Thinking Print: Books to Billboards, 1980-95," an ambitious and engaging show that covers a lot of ground in a thematically unified manner—linking the advent of new printmakers (e.g., Barbara Kruger, Félix González-Torres, Kiki Smith) with such recent trends as the resurgence of politically engaged art and of metaphors of the body. Through Sept. 10. (For the run of the Picasso show, the museum's hours are Saturdays through Mondays, 9:30 to 6; Tuesdays, 11 to 6; and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30. Timed-entry tickets to

Picasso are available in the lobby and through Ticketmaster, at 307-4545.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Meret Oppenheim: Beyond the Teacup." The subtitle says it all. The furry teacup remains perhaps the most famous Surrealist object, but it represents only the tip of the Oppenheim iceberg. It's an early work, done in 1936; the artist continued to produce paintings and sculptures—some sublime, others, frankly, awful—until her death, in 1985. The teacup's little-known yet magnificent complement is "Fur Gloves with Wooden Fingers" (also from 1936); the jungle-red nails protruding from the coarse fur gloves have a wonderfully creepy lycanthropic quality. Some fifty years later, she produced its lyrical coda, "Pair of Gloves," in periwinkle suede overlaid with a delicate web of red veins. Through Oct. 9. . . . ¶ "Africa: The Art of a Continent." Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ "In/Sight: African Photographers, 1940 to the Present." Through Sept. 22. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—"Mediascape" is exactly what we don't need: a swanky penny arcade of video installations for people who don't want to waste time actually thinking about art. The one really spectacular work is Nam June Paik's "Megatron," a wall of video monitors that have been manipulated with dazzling inventiveness and fiendish intensity. Through Sept. 15. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Perpetual Mirage: Photographic Narratives of the Desert West," a subdued, library-style exhibit of books and prints from 1848 to the present, which makes up in substance for what it lacks in fire. Most of the landmark photographic books on the subject are here—competing railroad reports illustrated by Alexander Gardner and A. J. Russell; mammoth survey albums that include works by Timothy O'Sullivan, Carleton Watkins, and William Henry Jackson; "An American Exodus," the searing dust-bowl record by Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor; "From the Missouri West," Robert Adams's complex revisioning of the land. And the prints are delightful. One O'Sullivan photograph details velvety black outcroppings of columnar basalt lining a volcanic ridge; in an exquisitely toned picture by Laura Gilpin, a powerful storm sweeps over the floodplain of the Rio Grande. Other well-chosen works come from Frederick Sommer, Edward Weston, Eliot Porter, Ansel Adams, Lewis Baltz, Mark Klett, Mary Peck, and Richard Misrach. The show ends with a coda of six prints by Lee Friedlander, who has recently trained his mercurial eye on the Sonoran Desert. His severe portraits of trees and brush are impenetrable thickets that seem to say that nothing about this terrain is clear anymore, that the road from here will be unlike anything we can imagine. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "NYNY: City of Ambition." The perfect summer show, an anthology of twentieth-century images of New York drawn mostly from the permanent collection, presented in an installation as bold, entertaining, and aggressive as the city itself. The emphasis is on photography, from the lavender majesty of Steichen's nocturnes to the gritty realism of Weegee, but some favorite paintings are dusted off as well: Georgia O'Keeffe, Edward Hopper, Charles Sheeler, and Joseph Stella are among those well represented. The architectural models of the Empire State Building (in carved plaster) and Rockefeller Center (in finely detailed wood) are fascinating—but why is a cocktail dress draped over Mies van der Rohe's model of the Seagram Building? Through Oct. 27. . . . ¶ "Paul Cadmus: The Sailor Trilogy." Through Sept. 1. . . . ¶ "An American Story," a chronological survey of twentieth-century paintings and sculptures, both well known and obscure, from the museum's collection. Through Oct. 6. . . . ¶ A stylized, gardenlike installation of video sculptures, by Shigeko Kubota. Through Aug. 25. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—An exhibition that explores the relationship between scientific research and its presentation in the media, specifically, the New York *Times*. Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ The Hall of Vertebrate Origins has reopened, its dropped ceiling removed to reveal Calvert Vaux's skylit design. All the better to see the dunkleosteus, a sixteen-foot-long hanging model of an armored fish, based on the four-foot-long fossil of its head, with self-sharpening jawbones. . . . ¶ "Amber: Window to the Past." Through Sept. 2. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Worlds Within Worlds." As long ago as the Sung dynasty (960-1279), Chinese artists and scholars collected fantastically shaped rocks both for their formal beauty and as aids to inspiration; seventy choice specimens are on display. Through Aug. 18. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Marc Chagall, 1907-1917." A selection of oils, gouaches, and drawings from the painter's early years in Vitebsk, St. Petersburg, and Paris. Through Aug. 4. (Open Mondays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 9; Sundays, 10 to 5:45.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Alicia D'Amico, Mario Cravo Neto, Luis Gonzalez Palma, and Flor Garduño are among the artists in "Image and Memory: Latin American Photography, 1880-1992." Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ "Working Shoes," an installation by Ana Busto. Through Sept. 15. . . . ¶ Photographs by nine New York City teen-agers are on view in "Re-Visions of El Barrio." Through Aug. 18. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Gaelic Gotham: A History of the Irish in New York" features more than four hundred paintings, prints, photographs, costumes, and other objects, from the museum's collection and on loan from many other institutions. Through Oct. 27. . . . ¶ "Currier & Ives, Printmakers to the American People." Through Aug. 4. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

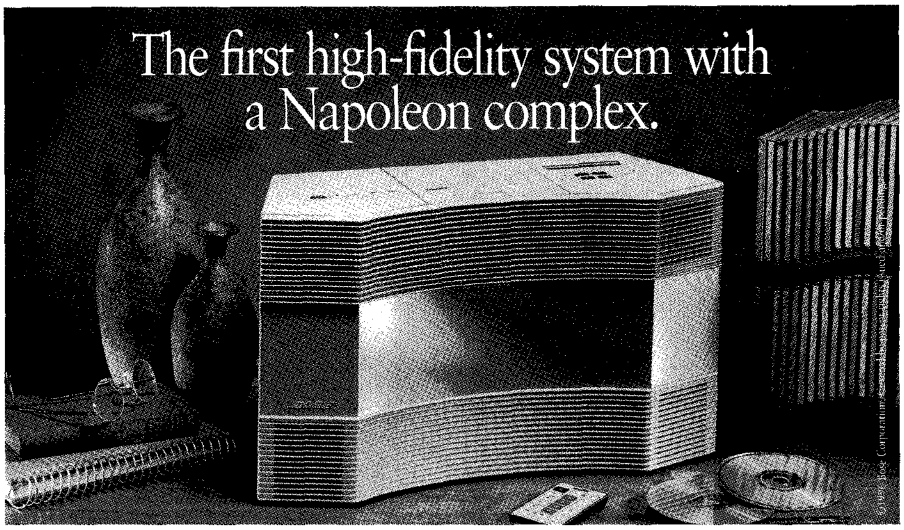
NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, Lincoln Center—"Puppets and Performing Objects in the 20th Century," a gathering of puppets, marionettes, and other constructions designed by a wide range of artists, including Alfred Jarry, Bil Baird, Jim Henson, Pat Oleszko, Henry Selick and Tim Burton, Lee Breuer, Julie Taymor, and Robert Wilson. Through Sept. 28. (Open daily, except Sundays, noon to 6, and Monday and Thursday evenings until 8.)

QUEENS MUSEUM AT THE BULOVA CORPORATE CENTER, 75-20 Astoria Blvd., Jackson Heights—"Richard Rothman: Studies fom Nature." Selections from an ongoing series of photographs about the marginalization of nature, made during frequent swings through the outer boroughs and New Jersey. "Sound Wall, Queens" and "Front Yard with Ailanthus, Brooklyn" are just two of several quick, sharp essays, while more complex tableaux, like "Tall Tree and American Flags, Astoria," "Housing Projects with White Shutters," and "Graves, Queens," richly repay the extended reading required. Through Sept. 8. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 7 to 7; Saturdays, 11 to 4. For more information and for directions, call 1-718 899-0700.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Summer hours: unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

JAMES LEE BYARS—He remains an artist eluding classification—a visionary for some, a charlatan for others. His work crisscrossed movements and mediums, touching on Fluxus, performance, minimalism, and Conceptualism. Some of his early pieces were ephemeral to the point of invisibility; subsequently he developed in the opposite direction, creating pared-down monuments in which he indulged his love of opulent



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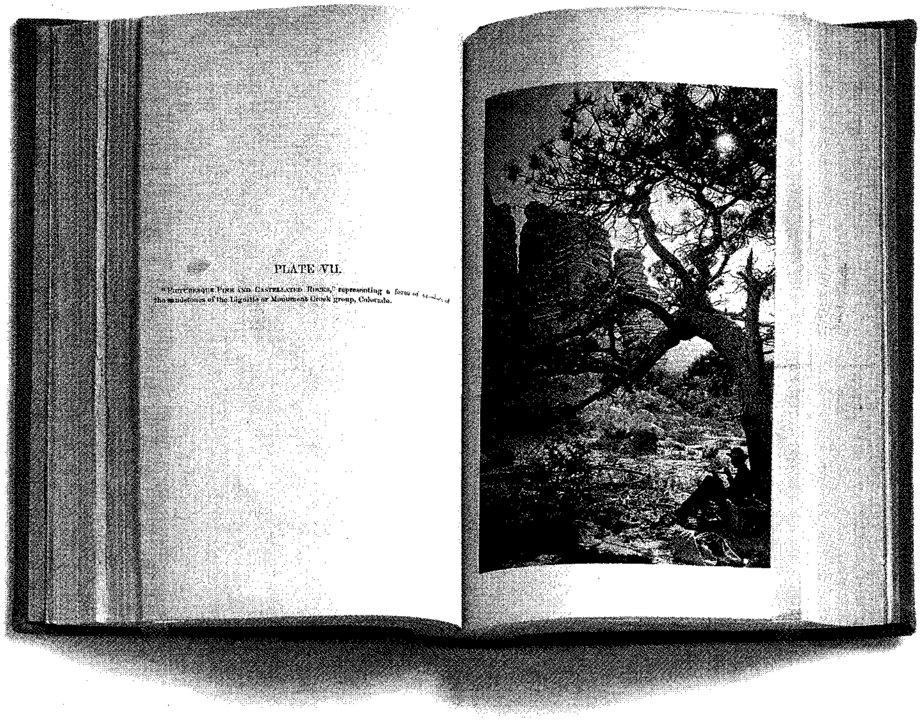
materials—marble, gold, or, in the case of "The Angel" (on view here), a hundred ever-so-fragile Venetian-glass spheres. The form of "The Angel" is something like a quadruple shepherd's crook, suggesting a possible Old Testament interpretation. Whatever it means, it remains a tribute to Byars' elusive yet poetic imagination and to his light touch with luxe. Through Aug. 16. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

Paul Cadmus—In this collection of recent drawings, mostly nude studies of his model and companion, Jon Anderson, the artist self-consciously attempts to reproduce the dramatic lighting and exquisite finish of Renaissance draftsmen such as Dürer. The drawings are sharply observed and pleasingly wrought, but they lack the bite and satirical whimsy of Cadmus's early work. At ninety-one, he may feel that he no longer needs to shock. Through Aug. 2. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. . . . ¶ The artist's "Sailor Trilogy" is on view at the Whitney Museum, through Sept. 1.)



A William Henry Jackson photograph in "Bulletin of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories: 1874 and 1875," in "Perpetual Mirage," at the Whitney.

COLLECTION OF THE GEOLOGY LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY

"Peep Show"—The most remarkable objects in this group exhibition on the theme of voyeurism are the sculptural animations by Gregory Barsamian: the technology is primitive—a three-dimensional version of the little books that children flip through—but the effect is transcendent, even spooky: they return the viewer to naïveté, to the magical era of the Punch and Judy show. There are some fine paintings and assemblages, too, notably Janice Gordon's urban fetishes, constructed from found objects, and Holly Lane's surrealistic vision of a Renaissance altarpiece, in a stylish hand-carved frame. Through Aug. 9. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Short List—**laurent de brunhoff,** Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. Through Aug. 2. . . . **elizabeth catlett,** Caribbean Cultural Center, 408 W. 58th St. Through Aug. 16. . . . **larry poons,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Through Aug. 30.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Edward Ruscha—A retrospective of the California Pop Conceptualist's artist books of the sixties. Their procedures (serialism, enumeration, etc.) notwithstanding, they avoided the often prim or sour seriousness of other Conceptual art. (The most dramatic of the books, "Royal Road Test," documents Ruscha and a friend's defenestration of a Royal typewriter onto a California freeway.) "Every Building on the Sunset Strip," "Twentysix Gasoline Stations," "Various Small Fires and Milk," "Some Los Angeles Apartments"—these serenely deadpan titles belie a body of work that, despite its unassuming manner and humble materials, represents one of the lasting achievements of sixties art. Through Aug. 31. (Printed Matter, 77 Wooster St. Open Saturdays until 7.)

"The Baseball Show"—Sixty artists were provided with a Rawlings Official American League baseball and invited to show their stuff. (This would be a snap for Christo.) What came back included a gold-leafed ball by Robert Longo, an installation with Astroturf by Jane Dickson, an ink drawing by Peter Schuyff, and a small video installation by Michel Auder, with footage from the final game of the 1977 World Series (Yanks win!). Through Aug. 9. (Marcus, 578 Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

Rex and **"Hung Gurus"**—Ink drawings by Rex and a group of works on paper by the Hun, Bastille, and Gengoroh Tagame. The gallery's director, Hudson, has never respected distinctions between fine art and fine porn: "I firmly believe that all the regular aesthetic criteria can be brought to bear on Rex's work and it holds up," he insists. "Why not even look at it in comparison to, say, Pointillist drawing?" That stated, the pictures by Rex et al. are very, *very* dirty—and sometimes also bracingly witty. In the gallery's back room is a small show of collages by the Los Angeles artist Richard Hawkins which features some of his favorite icons. (In the case of Keanu Reeves, who can fault him?) Hawkins has produced excellent work in the past, but this show looks a little wan. Through Aug. 9. (Feature, 76 Greene St.)

"Space, Mind, Place"—Installations and sculptures by seven artists whose works employ architectural referents: Michael Ashkin, Francis Cape, Susan Goldman, Rachel Harrison, Craig Kalpakjian, Calvin Seibert, and Andrea Zittel. Through Aug. 7. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Group Shows—At **bonakdar,** 130 Prince St.: A show by gallery artists, including the Pop Surrealist Charles Long's "Shelfishness," a wall-mounted sculpture combining shelf and nudibranch forms; Olafur Eliasson's "Blue Series," twenty-four Ektacolor prints documenting the search for hot springs in an eerie and desolate Icelandic landscape; and Peggy Preheim's "Trilogy for Andy," two pencil drawings after well-known Warhol self-portraits and another in which something seems to have gone seriously awry, as the late artist's visage blurs before a looming tendril and its ominous shadow. Through Aug. 2. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **greene naftali,** 526 W. 26th St.: Sculptures, assemblages, paintings, and photographs by Thomas Baldwin, Julie Becker, Rachel Harrison, Josephine Meckseper, and Luke Murphy. Through Aug. 2. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **kasmin,** 74 Grand St.: Crudely formed plaster-and-papier-mâché sculptures by Donald Baechler, akin to his childlike paintings; a little whitewashed house from Konstantin Kakanias, the interior lit by votive candles and painted with wild scenes of sexual license; and a small wood table supporting discarded airplane parts, by Nancy Rubins. Through Sept. 21. . . . **morris healy,** 530 W. 22nd St.: Drawings and other works by gallery artists which are either made directly on a wall, set into a wall, or, in the case of Tom Sachs, shot through a wall with a gun. Through Aug. 23. . . . **holly solomon,** 172 Mercer St.: The best offering here is Eric Drooker's series of scratchboard comix, in a jazzy, Lynd Ward style, depicting an ancient civilization, suspiciously psychedelic, flourishing in the tunnels and on the platforms of the L train (a bizarre place to seek inspiration). A brilliantly colorful, almost Blakean lyricism suffuses Drooker's gouaches—post-apocalyptic visions of urban bleakness. There's also a technologically sophisticated, painfully obvious video installation by Paul Garrin, and a little slide show by David Rokeby. Through Aug. 2. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **wimmer,** 560 Broadway: A mixed bag of videos, paintings, and mixed-medium works, notable for a tiny career retrospective from Carolee Schneemann, the inventor and all-time champion of body art. Steve Miller has contributed a pair of witty paintings, purporting to be X-rays of his mother's purse and dress shoes. Through Aug. 9. (Closed Mondays.)

Short List—**greg bogin** and **graham durward,** Boesky & Callery, 51 Greene St. Through Aug. 2. . . . **jene highstein,** Ace, 275 Hudson St. Opens at 1; closed Mondays, open Saturdays; through Aug. 17. . . . **shigeko kubota,** Fung, 537 Broadway. Opens at noon; closed Mondays; through Aug. 2.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Steven Brock—Black-and-white portraits and street scenes of fiesta-going villagers in Pomabamba, Peru. The pictures show worshippers and dancers en route to the festivities or returning home, and they highlight feelings of anticipation and satisfaction rather than revelry. The artist is superb at capturing the Andean light, but he sometimes gets lost in the gulf between documentary and artistic expression, producing sharp images with a vague point of view. That chasm is a rewarding region to explore, however, and a handful of pictures fuse the two sensibilities. In one radiant portrait of a patiently waiting little girl in a felt hat, earrings, a wool sweater, and an embroidered dress, Brock seems to epitomize the gentle dignity of the Incan people. Through Aug. 16. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976)—Cunningham brought an intoxicating freshness to her subjects, whether artists or cultivars from her garden. "Flora," a selection of her botanical images from the twenties and thirties, is on view. Through Aug. 2. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

George Platt Lynes (1907-55)—Photographs from the thirties through the fifties, staged with flair, of the famous and the hunky: Paul Cadmus with an angelic Lillian Gish, her hair tangled in a thicket of tremendous meaning, lit in the lurid style of Edgar G. Ulmer; Yul Brynner, with hair and without trousers; W. H. Auden, groping in a garbage can; and a bevy of forgotten boys, whose prettiness now induces melancholy, somehow. Through Aug. 2. (DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"California Photography from a Seventies Perspective, Part III"—Selections from a collection that was formed in a one-month period in 1979. Among the eighteen artists whose work is on view are Diane Buckler, John Divola, Barbara Kasten, Richard Misrach, Leland Rice, and Larry Sultan. Through Aug. 16. (Seagram Building, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St., fourth floor. Closes Fridays at 1.)

"The Cool & the Crazy"—Images of punk through the years, from a naked Iggy Pop to Television at CBGB to Lydia Lunch to Richard Hell. The photographers include Jimmy de Sana, Gerard Malanga, Andy Warhol, Robert Mapplethorpe, Allen Ginsberg, Annie Leibovitz, Stephen Shore, and Pennie Smith. Through Sept. 7. (McGrath, 20 W. 57th St. Closed Mondays.)

"Dance in America"—A survey of the different styles and approaches of the dance photographers Lois Greenfield, Gjon Mili, and Barbara Morgan. Through Aug. 2. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

"Delirium"—Summer group shows generally shoot for a light spirit and an easily grasped theme (or none at all); this large selection of portraits and a few abstract images, from 1854 to the present, has a darker cast, and it hangs together beautifully. Among the artists whose work is on view are Nancy Burson, George Krause, Saul Leiter, Joe Mills, Gerald Slota, Melissa Springer, and Jill Waterman. Through Aug. 17. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

"Nude York"—Whaddaya think? Nudes by thirty-one photographers, among them Rebecca Blake, Colette, Sheila Metzner, Andres Serrano, Bert Stern, and Aoi Tsutsumi. Through Aug. 17. (Anthony, 589 Broadway. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

"Out Takes"—Uncharacteristic works by such gallery artists as Sally Apfelbaum, Bill Jacobson, Geanna Merola, Tseng Kwong Chi, and Penelope Umbrico. Through Aug. 16. (Saul, 560 Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

"Photogravure"—A survey of works made with the metal-plate printing process, from illustrations in *Camera Work* to examples by Baldessari, Clemente, Rauschenberg, Ruscha, and Siskind. Through Aug. 16. (Marlborough Graphics, 40 W. 57th St.)

"Summer Salon III (Pictures We Like)"—This third annual show features photographs by Walker Evans, Peter Garfield, David Stephenson, Louis Stettner, Eudora Welty, and Weegee. Through Aug. 9. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

"Two" / Evelyn Hofer—A diverse selection of photographs that feature pairs of things—trees, feet, windows, watermelons, flowers, angels, firemen. The artists include Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Eugène Atget, André Kertész, Koichiro Kurita, August Sander, Jill Seymour, and Edward Weston. / Double portraits and interiors that inspired the concurrent group show. Both shows through Aug. 23. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Landscapes of the Civil War." Selections from the five thousand recently discovered albumen prints in the collection of the Medford (Massachusetts) Historical Society. Through Nov. 10. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**ROGER BALLEN**, Taranto, 39 W. 14th St. Open Saturdays; through Aug. 17. . . . **ANTHONY BARBOZA**, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through Aug. 16. . . . **GUSTAV KLUTSIS**, Schickler, 52 E. 76th St. Through Aug. 16. . . . **JONAS MEKAS**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Closed Mondays; through Aug. 16. . . . **PEDRO MEYER**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays; through Aug. 17. . . . **DAVID TURNLEY** and **PETER TURNLEY**, International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through Sept. 8. . . . **BING WRIGHT / JENNY SAVILLE AND GLEN LUCHFORD**, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Closes at 4 on Fridays; through Aug. 30.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, el Museo del Barrio, and the Queens Museum at the Bulova Corporate Center.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL

(For information about tickets to all festival events, call 875-5030.)

"Brain Opera"—An hour-and-forty-five-minute interactive work by Tod Machover which makes ample use of digital technology. (Marble Lobby, Juilliard School, 155 W. 65th St. July 31-Aug. 3, beginning every hour on the hour from 1 to 7. Free tickets can be obtained at the box office of Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theatre from 10 to 1 on the days of the performances.)

Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and Monteverdi Choir—John Eliot Gardiner conducts Beethoven's "Leonore," the original, 1805 version of the opera that eventually became "Fidelio." The cast in this concert performance features soprano Hillevi Martinpelto in the title role and tenor Kim Begley as her imprisoned husband. (Alice Tully Hall. Aug. 1 at 8.)

LISTENING BOOTH

"The Monteverdi Circle"—Even listeners indifferent to most early music make time for Monteverdi; probably no composer before Beethoven fomented so great an artistic revolution simply by giving free rein to his personality. For several decades the members of the Consort of Musicke (the Baroque superstar soprano Emma Kirkbye and the mezzo-soprano Evelyn Tubb among them) have interpreted Monteverdi's madrigals with élan. In this new series, on the Musica Oscura/Column Classics label, they investigate the works of the composer's contemporaries, filling in some egregious gaps with superlative performances of vocal and instrumental pieces.

The initial releases cover a wide swath: Cipriano de Rore's finely honed "Fifth Book of Madrigals" (1568—the year after Monteverdi's birth), which defines the serene polyphonic style that Monteverdi would bend to his own expressive purposes; Biagio Marini's ravishing "Concerto Terzo delle Musiche da Camera" (1649), which extends the drama of Monteverdi's late madrigal style into the mid-Baroque; and Walter Porter's "Madrigals and Ayres" (1632), nineteen profoundly obscure pieces (in English) by Monteverdi's only known British pupil, culminating in the touching "Wake, Sorrow, Wake," an elegy for a departed noblewoman who (we learn from the text) lived a dismal life. Don't be put off by the risible covers: each volume boasts high musical standards. The singers fearlessly negotiate the Italian works' filigree of coloratura; their part-singing is immaculately tuned and expressively voiced. And on the Porter disk the voice of bass Richard Wistreich, whose every recorded performance is a delight, resonates with unerring clarity.

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Kurt Masur conducting. July 31 and Aug. 2 at 8 and Aug. 4 at 3: A concert performance of Beethoven's "Fidelio," the final, 1814 version of the composer's only completed opera. The cast includes Deborah Voigt as Leonore and Gary Lakes as Florestan. . . . ¶ Aug. 6-7 at 8: The Philharmonic contributes to the festival's Morton Feldman retrospective (see below) with a rendition of his "Structures for Orchestra." A fine example of the composer's gentle, pointillistic style, the eleven-minute-long "Structures" was premièred in Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1968 but has rarely been performed since. The program also includes two excerpts from Strauss's "Salome" (the "Dance of the Seven Veils" and the Final Scene, with soprano Maria Ewing), as well as two unusual works that are presented less frequently than they deserve: Strauss's "Metamorphosen," for twenty-three solo strings, and Hindemith's "Concert Music for Strings and Brass."

"Four Saints in Three Acts"—Virgil Thomson's 1934 opera to a libretto by Gertrude Stein, in Robert Wilson's production (previously performed at Houston Grand Opera). Dennis Russell Davies conducts. (New York State Theatre. Aug. 1 at 7; Aug. 2 at 8; and Aug. 3 at 2 and 8. . . . **NOTE:** A lecture on the work's social impact, which will be presented on Aug. 2 at 6:30 in the Kaplan Penthouse of Lincoln Center's Rose Building, is open to those with tickets to any of the opera's performances.)

Morton Feldman Celebration—Feldman (1926-1987), whose aesthetic was formed by the confluence of rigorous modernist training from Wallingford Riegger and Stefan Wolpe, a profound sympathy with Abstract Expressionist painting, and the liberating influence of John Cage, stands as a paradigm of the twentieth-century American composer. His mature works exhibit tendencies more intuitive than systematic, sometimes employing a generalized graphlike notation or leaving details of pitch or rhythm to the performers. In the last decade of his life he became consumed with a passion for long pieces, such that nine of his late single-movement works each last more than an hour and a half. "Up to one hour you think about form, but after an hour and a half it's scale," Feldman once explained. "It requires a heightened kind of concentration. Before, my pieces were like objects; now, they're like evolving things." Aug. 2 at 8: Members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center perform "Only," "I Met Heine on the Rue Fürstenberg," "The Viola in My Life I," and "Why Patterns?" (Ethical Culture Society.) . . . ¶ Aug. 3 at 1: Pianist Aki Takahashi performs "Illusions," "Extensions 3," "Piano," and "Triadic Memories." (Ethical Culture Society.) . . . ¶ Aug. 3 at 5: The Kronos String Quartet offers an ultra-rare performance of the String Quartet II, all six hours of it—be forewarned—without a break. (Alice Tully Hall.) . . . ¶ Aug. 4 at 4: Mezzo-soprano Joan La Barbara is featured in "Three Voices," and the Essential Music Ensemble plays "For Samuel Beckett." (Ethical Culture Society.)

OTHER PERFORMANCES IN TOWN

New York Grand Opera—The initial seasons of Vincent La Selva's chronological Verdi project have so far served up a feast of little-known works. But now, in the middle of year three, the conductor arrives at "Macbeth," Verdi's tenth opera, which earned the composer thirty-eight curtain calls after its première, in Florence, in 1847. Eighteen years after that, the composer revised it for a Paris production, adding a ballet sequence, a duet for the Macbeths, and Lady M.'s famous aria "La Luce Langue." In this staged production of the Paris version, baritone Theodore Lambrinos portrays the title character and is goaded to infamy by soprano Marisa Galvany as his wicked wife. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 31 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Wednesdays in the Garden—In the concluding concert of this outdoor series, flutist Joseph Trent and harpist Margerie Fitts offer works by Bach, Fauré, and others. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. July 31 at 7:30. No tickets necessary. In case of rain, the proceedings move inside to the parish hall.)

American Opera Projects—Presenting the première of Vivian Fine's "Memoirs of Uliana Rooney," an opera that traces the life of "a fictitious, feisty, feminist American composer . . . from the nineteen-twenties to the present day," a description that incorporates more than a few strands of Ms. Fine's own biography. She was born in 1913 and currently resides upstate. Sonya Friedman created the libretto and the video montage. Soprano Melanie Helton sings the title role, baritone James Busterud depicts her four husbands, and Fred Cohen conducts Relâche, the contemporary-music ensemble from Philadelphia. (Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. Aug. 1 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Bargemusic—Aug. 1 at 7:30 and Aug. 4 at 4: Clarinettist Thomas Hill and pianist Mihae Lee perform Alec Templeton's "Pocketsize Sonata," in a program that also includes Mozart's Clarinet Trio and Schumann's G-Minor Piano Trio. Violinist and violist Carmit Zori and cellist Ronald Thomas complete the ensemble. . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 7:30: The Peabody Trio offers piano trios by Haydn, Ives, and Ravel. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061.)

Summergarden—Joel Sachs leads a chamber orchestra of Juilliard students in twentieth-century works composed in Paris: Stravinsky's "Dumbarton Oaks" Concerto, Philippe Hersant's "Lebenslauf—Six Songs," Tristan Murail's "Vues Aëriennes," and Satie's "Relâche." (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. Aug. 2-3 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—The chamber orchestra celebrates its tenth anniversary with a pair of Classical concertos: Haydn's C-Major Cello Concerto (featuring Maria Kitsopoulos) and Franz Anton Hoffmeister's Viola Concerto (with Rebecca Young). (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Aug. 4 at noon.)

Bronx Arts Ensemble—Pianist Carlos Franzetti performs in two free programs that include music by Gershwin, Chick Corea, Ernesto Lecuona, and Astor Piazzolla, as well as his own Serenata. (Aug. 4 at 2. Rockwood Drive Circle, Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. In case of rain, the performance will be held at the Church of the Mediator, Kingsbridge Ave. at W. 231st St. . . . ¶ Aug. 4 at 4. McGinley Center, Fordham University, Bronx Rose Hill Campus.)

Salon Soirées—The second-floor music room of the Hotel Wales is the setting for performances of Schubert's "Trout" Quintet and several of Ilan Rechtman's "Jazzicals." (Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Aug. 4 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Yakov Rubinstein—The violinist, who has just completed his first season as the concertmaster of the Bamberg Symphony, joins pianist Ilan Rechtman in sonatas by Mozart (in B-Flat Major, K. 454) and Beethoven (his Seventh, in C Minor). (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. Aug. 5 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—July 31 at 8:30: Pianist Richard Goode performs Bach's Partita No. 4, works by Chopin and Brahms, and Beethoven's C-Minor Sonata (Op. 111). . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 8:30: John Williams conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra in selections from his score for the film "Schindler's List," as well as in Copland's "Music for the Theatre," Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Gil Shaham), and Tchaikovsky's "Capriccio Italien." . . . ¶ Aug. 3 at 8:30: Trevor Pinnock leads members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus in a Baroque program: Handel's anthem "Zadok the Priest" and his "Music for the Royal Fireworks," Bach's E-Major Violin Concerto (with Malcolm Lowe), and Baroque opera and oratorio arias (featuring soprano Cyndia Sieden). . . . ¶ Aug. 4 at 2:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Richard Goode) and Tchaikovsky's "Manfred" Symphony. . . . ¶ Aug. 6 at 8:30: A wide-ranging program by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra includes Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" and post-performance fireworks. (Lenox, Mass. 1-413 637-5165.)

Caramoor—Aug. 1 at 4:15: The young pianist Orli Shaham performs a hefty program: Bach's Partita No. 5, Beethoven's "Thirty-two Variations on an Original Theme" (WoO 80), Schumann's "Faschingsschwank aus Wien" and "Fantasiebilder," several works by Chopin (including the Fourth Ballade), and Mendelssohn's "Rondo Capriccioso." . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 8: Jazz-piano improvisations with Armen Donelian and Abdullah Ibrahim. . . ¶ Aug. 3 at 8:30: Pianist Dave Burrell joins trumpeter John Faddis's quartet in a jazz program. . . . ¶ Aug. 4 at 5:30: The Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio presents two of the most imposing classics of the piano-trio repertoire, Beethoven's "Archduke" and Schubert's Trio in E-Flat Major. (Katonah, N.Y. 1-914 232-1252. The festival continues through Aug. 11.)

Glimmerglass Opera—Aug. 1 at 8 and Aug. 3 at 1:30: "Don Pasquale." . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 8 and Aug. 6 at 2: "La Calisto," composed in 1651 by Francesco Cavalli. . . . ¶ Aug. 3 at 8 and Aug. 5 at 2: Mozart's "La Finta Giardiniera." . . . ¶ Aug. 4 at 2: "Lizzie Borden," by Jack Beeson. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 1-607 547-2255.)

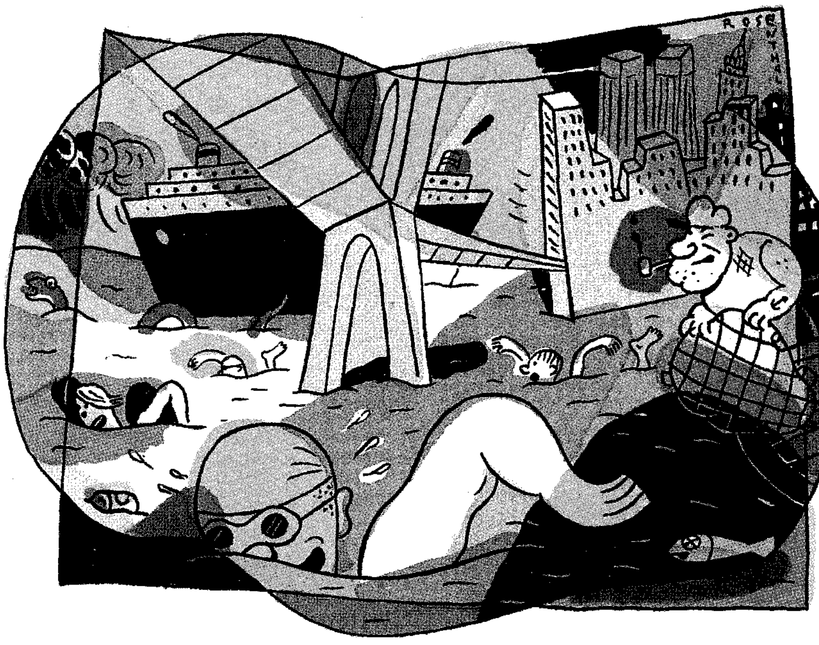
Sullivan County Weekend of Chamber Music—As this mini-festival in a Delaware River community reaches its third season, it scores a coup: the first North American performance of Richard Strauss's Piano Trio No. 2 in D Major, which will be played by the Montecillo Trio. It is one of two early piano trios that the composer penned in 1877 and 1878 (when he was thirteen and fourteen years old) but never had performed. After his death, in 1949, the Strauss archives kept a lid on the works; but members of the Montecillo Trio learned of their existence eight years ago, and they finally convinced the archives to let them play both scores (which they are recording this summer for the ASV label). Also on the program are Reger's G-Major Serenade for Flute, Violin, and Viola (featuring the festival's organizer, flutist Judith Pearce), Hindemith's "Acht Stücke," and Schumann's Piano Quartet. (Tusten Theatre, Narrowsburg, N.Y. Aug. 3 at 8. 1-914 932-8527.)

Maverick Concerts—The Raphael Trio performs piano trios by Schubert (his Nocturne and B-Flat-Major Trio) and Wolf-Ferrari (his Second). (Woodstock, N.Y. 1-914 679-8217. Aug. 4 at 3.)

Music Mountain—Aug. 3 at 8: The Cavani String Quartet, with flutist Samuel Baron, in music by Mozart and Turina. . . . ¶ Aug. 4 at 3: The Borromeo String Quartet plays quartets by Mozart (in F Major, K. 168) and Beethoven (in B-Flat Major, Op. 130, with the "Grosse Fuge" attached); Haesun Paik assists the foursome in Schumann's Piano Quintet. (Falls Village, Conn. For information, call 1-860 824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Swim Where?—Lap swimmers are not commonly required to negotiate such obstacles as float planes, prison barges, tour boats, whirlpools, or the intake valves of sewage-disposal plants. But that's the view through the goggles for the twenty-one swimmers who will dive into the Hudson River this Saturday morning at 11, for the Manhattan Island Marathon Swim (one lap counterclockwise around the borough). For those who do not require total immersion to celebrate the local waterways, there's a festival near the Battery Park Firehouse (the marathon's start and finish) during the race, offering seafood, song, swing music, tap dance, water-filtration demonstrations, and so on. Note: while the men scheduled to compete outnumber the women by a ratio of nearly ten to one, the men's course record (5:53:57) is somewhat pokier than the women's (5:45:25). (The best views of the finish are from Battery Park, on Aug. 3, beginning at 6 P.M.)



Taking the waters: the Manhattan Island Marathon Swim.

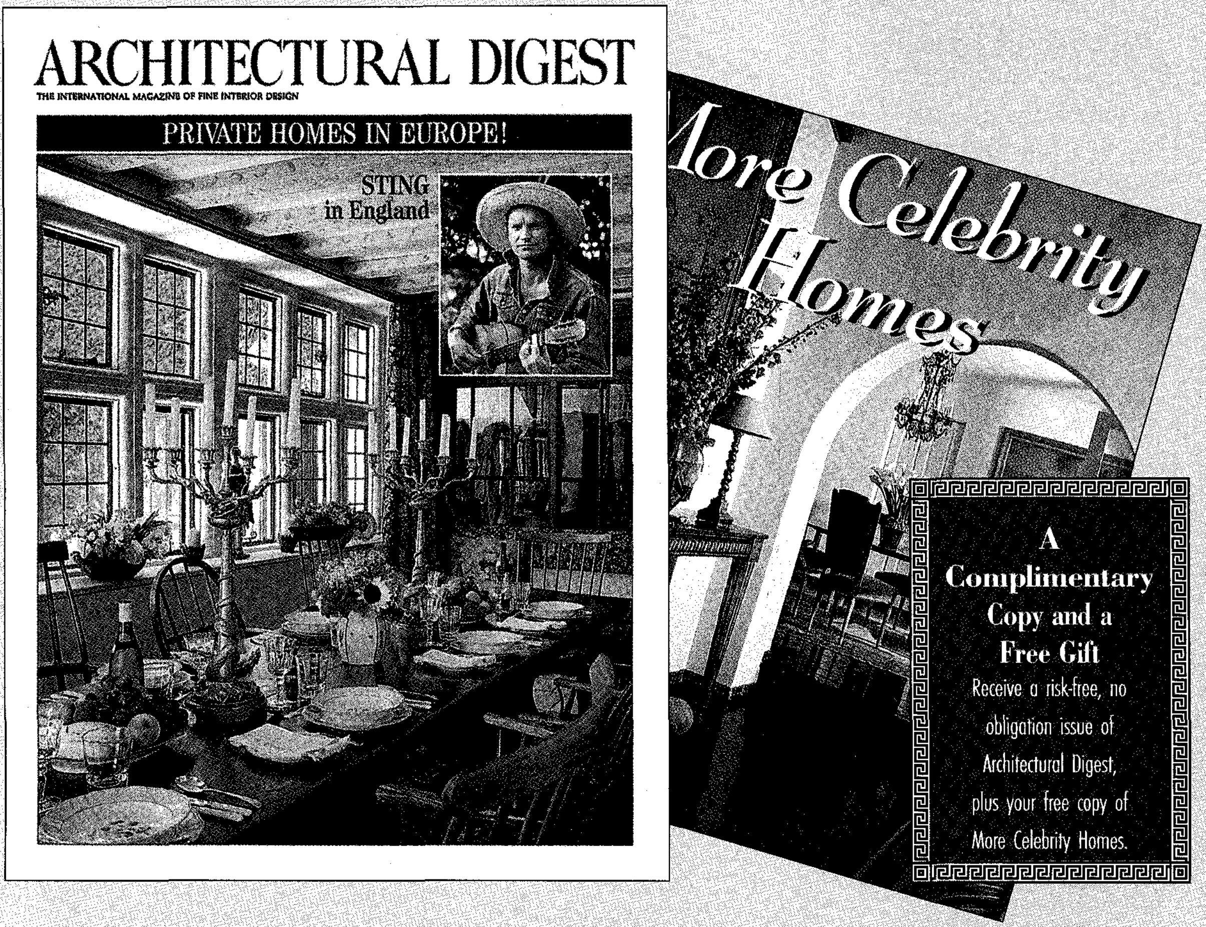
Model Citizens—"I have models of ships that I have built from scratch," Murray Cukier, a retired mechanic, reported in a recent phone interview. "I made a Constitution—an Ironsides, I'm looking at it—with twenty-four guns. Each gun has twenty parts." This weekend, the painstaking Mr. Cukier—along with any other model builders who have registered to display their ships and boats in the free festival—will bring his flotilla to the South Street Seaport for a convention of enthusiasts. (Fulton Market, Fulton St. at Front St. To register, call 748-8615. Aug. 3-4, from 1 to 5.)

Midsummer Night Swing—Alfresco dancing continues on the Plaza at Lincoln Center. July 31: Marty Grosz and Destiny's Tots. . . . ¶ Aug. 1: The Artie Shaw orchestra. . . . ¶ Aug. 2: Jimmy Sturr and his orchestra. . . . ¶ Aug. 3: Leroy Jones. (Tickets available at the entrance.)

Readings—July 31 at 7: *Vogue* editor and *Observer* gossip columnist Billy Norwich reads from his roman à clef, "Learning to Drive." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Aug. 1 at 7:30: Novelist Rafael Yglesias reads from his "Dr. Neruda's Cure for Evil." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 66th St. No tickets necessary.)

Walk—Aug. 4 at 1: To celebrate Harlem Week, historian James S. Kaplan and former city commissioner Robert E. Wilson III chart the changes that transformed the neighborhood from a Jewish community at the turn of the century to the cultural capital of black America only a few years later. For more information, call 996-1100.

MARC ROSENTHAL



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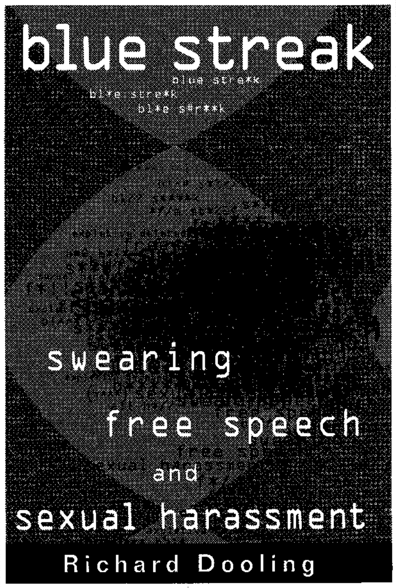

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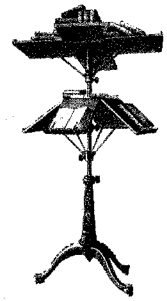

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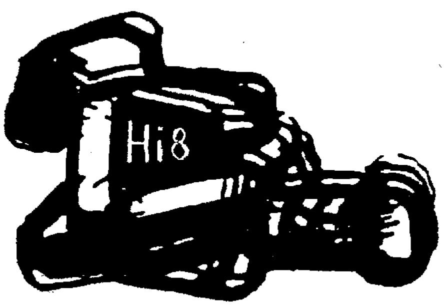
VILLE ET VILLAGE

THE MOVIES



FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

CHAIN REACTION—Keanu Reeves and Rachel Weisz star as a pair of researchers framed for murder, in Andrew Davis's thriller about newly discovered energy sources and industrial espionage. With Morgan Freeman. Opening August 2. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 34th Street Showplace.)

EMMA—Douglas McGrath's film version of Jane Austen's masterpiece, with Gwyneth Paltrow as the eponymous heroine. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening August 2. (Cinema II, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

MATILDA—Danny DeVito directs a comedy based on Roald Dahl's children's novel, starring DeVito, Rhea Perlman, and Mara Wilson. Opening August 2. (Gemini, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

PHAT BEACH—A comedy in which two Los Angeles teen-agers (Jermaine ''Huggy'' Hopkins and Brian Hooks) head to the shore for a weekend of hawking sunglasses and chasing girls. With Coolio, Claudia Kaleem, Gregg Vance, and Tre Black. Directed by Doug Ellin. Opening August 2. (Criterion Center.)

CURRENT FILMS

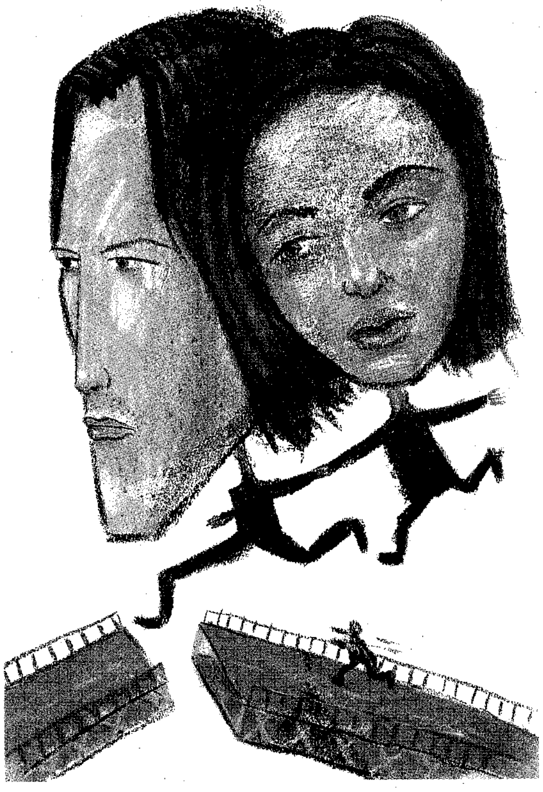
(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and James Wolcott. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 20.)

THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO—The wood-carver's progeny's tale, directed by Steve Barron. With Martin Landau as Geppetto and Jonathan Taylor Thomas supplying the voice of the puppet. (84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

COURAGE UNDER FIRE—The lofty-sounding title is misleading. Edward Zwick's film doesn't tell us much about the nature of heroism: the only issue in this very sober and correct military drama is a narrow one—whether the medevac pilot Karen Walden (Meg Ryan), killed in action in the Gulf War, should be awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor. Denzel Washington, as the officer in charge of the investigation, has to sort out wildly divergent accounts of her behavior, dramatized in ''Rashomon''-like flashbacks. Washington's thoughtful, delicately shaded performance holds the viewer's interest for a while—or, at least, serves as a distraction from the fundamental monotony of the ''Is she or isn't she?'' mystery. He can't win this battle single-handed, though; the material's relentless lack of consequence finally overpowers him, too. The movie isn't a disgrace, but it doesn't deserve any medals. Also with Lou Diamond Phillips, Michael Moriarty, Matt Damon, and Scott Glenn. Screenplay by Patrick Sheane Duncan.—T.R. (Baronet, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Waverly.)

FLED—This tiresome buddy picture from the bottom of the action barrel, starring Stephen Baldwin and Laurence Fishburne as convicts on the run from the law and the mob, is filled with racist and homophobic insult humor that no amount of goofy good will from the actors could justify. The director, Kevin Hooks, and the scriptwriter, Preston A. Whitmore II, have loaded it with obvious references (''The Godfather,'' ''The Fly,'' ''The Fugitive''); every explosion, chase scene, gun battle, and line of dialogue is so familiar that the movie plays like a series of trailers from already-seen films.—B.D. (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE FRIGHTENERS—Michael J. Fox has a gift for acting with special effects—he makes the virtual environment around him very believable. But he has a big job ahead of him in Peter Jackson's new film, a dark ''Poltergeist''-like comedy filled with hundreds of computer-generated effects. Jackson, a splatter wizard whose over-the-top style was on brilliant display in the New Zealand-made ''Dead Alive,'' hypes up every scene with myriad bits of business, but the clunkiness of his narrative rhythms and the relentlessness of his pacing betray him. Most of the jokey first half, with Fox tracking down a ghostly Grim Reaper-like killer, falls flat; but the second half, a kind of ''Natural Born Killers'' sendup, has some intermittent thrills. Fox's earnest performance grounds the film, while the rest of the cast camps it up nicely: Dee Wallace Stone and Jake Busey are especially good, and Jeffrey Combs, a ''Re-Animator'' alumnus, gives the psycho performance of a lifetime as a twisted F.B.I. agent—his hilariously soul-sick Agent Cooper/Fox Mulder



Opening August 2, Keanu Reeves and Rachel Weisz in "Chain Reaction."

AHMET GÖRGÜN

impression provides, for a time, the quirky, scary brilliance the movie needs.—B.D. (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Metro Cinema, National Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 34th Street Showplace.)

The Hunchback of Notre Dame—In Disney's new animated offering, directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, it's hard to open your heart to Quasimodo (voiced by Tom Hulce), whose misfortune is not so much the malformation of his body as the hideously cute grin that mars his face. Esmeralda's lines are spoken by Demi Moore; a two-dimensional Moore is arguably more animated than the standard three-dimensional model, but the character is still too glutinous to be much fun. The heartwarming mush proves no competition for the murkier details; what gives the film some depth, and makes it a weird choice for a family outing, is Frollo (spoken by Tony Jay), the cathedral bigwig who not only has the hots for Esmeralda but insists on singing about them at great length.—A.L. (7/8/96) (Cinema 3rd Avenue, Embassy 4, Lincoln Square, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Village Theatre VII.)

Independence Day—The big summer alien-invasion movie, in which the German director Roland Emmerich delivers the populist message that the land of the free is still a scrappy, defiant, can-do country. Bill Pullman plays the Clintonesque President; Jeff Goldblum has the geek-elegant role of a cable-television technician turned scientific savior; Will Smith is a Marine fighter pilot who captures the first alien with a punch to the head. At the end, millions are dead and the battered survivors stand around grinning as if they've just won a volleyball game. This shallowness is scarier than anything in the movie. The film gives the audience what it craves: spectacular nothing.—J.W. (7/15/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 34th St. East, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

Joe's Apartment—A comedy combining computerized special effects and live action, about a young New Yorker (Jerry O'Connell) and roaches. Written and directed by John Payson. (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

Kingpin—Woody Harrelson, Bill Murray, and Randy Quaid star in Peter and Bobby Farrelly's bowling comedy. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Astor Plaza, 86th Street East Twin, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Waverly.)

Lone Star—The setting is Frontera, a small Texas town on the Mexican border, once policed by Sheriff Buddy Deeds (Matthew McConaughey) and now overseen by his son, Sam (Chris Cooper). The writer-director, John Sayles, shifts between the two eras with gracious ease, linking them with an old crime—the unsolved and unmourned killing of Buddy's predecessor, Charley Wade (Kris Kristofferson), who held sway through bigotry and corruption. Thanks to Kristofferson's scary and unyielding performance, the murder mystery becomes the core of the film. Elsewhere you can sense the strain as Sayles works away at the generation gaps, but by the end you're grateful for the movie's weight and substance—rare virtues in a flimsy summer.—A.L. (7/8/96) (Angelika Film Center, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 68th St. Playhouse.)

Manny & Lo—A young orphan (Scarlett Johansson) and her teen-age sister (Aleksa Palladino) hit the road and enter a life of crime, in a comedy written and directed by Lisa Krueger. With Mary Kay Place. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Multiplicity—In Harold Ramis's comedy, Michael Keaton plays four roles: a middle-class homeowner named Doug and the three clones who are supposed to help him simplify his complicated, time-pressured life (and who, naturally, end up having precisely the opposite effect). Any movie in which Keaton constitutes a significant percentage of the cast has a lot going for it, and he's terrific in all four of his incarnations. Unfortunately, the picture has as many screenwriters as it has Dougs—the credits list Chris Miller, Mary Hale, Lowell Ganz, and Babaloo Mandel—and the writers' combined efforts somehow fail to generate the kind of volatile humor that the plot promises and that the star deserves: the script, like the hero's scheme, collapses in chaos. Also with Andie MacDowell, Harris Yulin, and (too briefly) Eugene Levy.—T.R. (7/29/96) (Criterion Center, Gemini, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

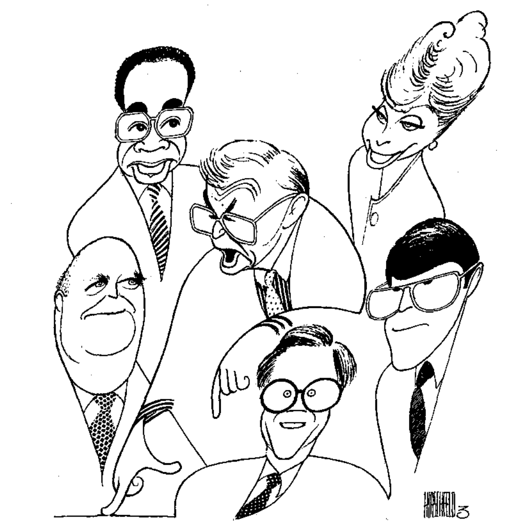
The Nutty Professor—Eddie Murphy brings some freshness to this new twist on the old Jerry Lewis comedy, starring as both Klump, a science teacher of vast proportions and surprising sweetness, and as Buddy Love, the chattering womanizer into whom Klump is transformed by a gene-restructuring potion. The war between gentleness and mania lends muscle to what is, for the most part, an exuberant gross-out; the gags start at "Animal House" level and work downward, and the director, Tom Shadyac, doesn't so much pace the film as try to keep up with the unstoppable riffs of his star. The makeup and special effects are a blast.—A.L. (7/8/96) (Art Greenwich Twin, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, National Twin, 19th Street East 6, and Orpheum VII.)

Phenomenon—John Travolta plays George Malley, a regular-guy auto mechanic in rural California who looks up into the sky on his thirty-seventh birthday and is embraced by an intense light. Suddenly he's a genius, decoding secret Air Force messages, turning pig manure into fuel, and slowly, persistently winning the heart of Lace, a reclusive single mother (Kyra Sedgwick). Until the dénouement—a tearjerking piece of hagiography—it's surprisingly enjoyable, and Travolta's performance, a tour de force of clarity, conviction, economy of effort, and focussed will, is pretty close to genius. Jon Turtletaub ("While You Were Sleeping") directed.—S.K. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Guild, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through Aug. 1.)

Stonewall—This semi-fictional account of the events that led to the epochal gay-liberation riot outside the Stonewall Inn in 1969 focusses on the bar's patrons—mostly drag queens—and the police harassment they withstood, and in particular on a diva (touchingly played by Guillermo Diaz) and her love affair with a handsome, straight-acting boy. It's entertainingly shallow. Although the storytelling is far from convincing (the characters tend to behave in an enlightened, p.c. fashion), the movie's core is fantasy—part wish fulfillment, part empowerment politics. The fond remembrances cloud the issues; the film's true heart is in its soap-opera subplots, which bubble harmlessly along. Directed by Nigel Finch.—B.D. (Quad Cinema and 62nd & Broadway.)

Supercop—Jackie Chan's latest release is great fun, entertainingly dubbed—a big improvement over "Rumble in the Bronx." The director, Stanley Tong, has taken the story about undercover cops and drug dealers to huge, James Bond-like locations, allowing Chan the space to choreograph some bone-breaking fight sequences and stunts. And while Chan's karate moves are as balletic and as funny as ever, he's given the best stunts to his co-star, the fabulous Michelle Khan. (At one point she rides a speeding motorcycle atop a moving train.) Chan and Khan's synchronized rolls and tumbles are so graceful and accomplished and their good humor so consistent that the couple could become the Astaire and Rogers of the martial arts.—B.D. (84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, Embassy 2, Gemini, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Village Theatre VII.)

A Time to Kill—Joel Schumacher's Deep South courtroom thriller has the solemn tone of a Stanley Kramer social-problem drama and the self-consciously steamy look of the Faulk-



UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

They're The McLaughlin Group. Each with a view that's contentious and contagious. (clockwise from left) Jack Germond, Clarence Page, John McLaughlin, Eleanor Clift, Morton Kondracke and Fred Barnes.
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We bring good things to life.

ner and Tennessee Williams adaptations that, in the fifties, were Hollywood's favorite means of appearing literary while also showcasing the physical attributes of its leanest hunks and its more voluptuous sirens. The script—by Akiva Goldsman, from a John Grisham novel—follows a young white lawyer (Matthew McConaughey) as he defends a black man (Samuel L. Jackson) accused of murdering a couple of rednecks. McConaughey, in his first leading role, is given the full star-is-born treatment, but it's hard not to feel that he has been untimely ripped from his obscurity. And the movie inflates Grisham's modest, perceptive portrait of a Mississippi town into a smug lecture on race relations. What the hero and all the other sweat-soaked characters here really need is central air-conditioning, but what they get from Schumacher and Goldsman is an overpowering blast of homiletic hot air. Also with Sandra Bullock, Kevin Spacey, Oliver Platt, Ashley Judd, Donald Sutherland, Kiefer Sutherland, Charles S. Dutton, and Patrick McGoohan.—T.R. (7/29/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

Trainspotting—The writer John Hodge and the director Danny Boyle worked together on "Shallow Grave"; their latest collaboration, based on Irvine Welsh's novel, is a very different affair—faster, more furious, and far more intrigued by the frailties of the flesh. Why should people looking for a good time see a film about skinny, cynical heroin addicts in Edinburgh? Because the junkies themselves are having such a good time (apart from the instances when they almost die, that is) that what sounds grungy and depressing turns out to be weirdly uplifting. The performances—especially those of Ewan McGregor, in the leading role, and Robert Carlyle, as a terrifying hard man named Begbie—feel driven and unashamed, and Boyle's fidgety, try-anything style is horribly infectious; though the film sells you short on plot, it makes you ravenous for the next visual fix. But it's relentlessly proud of its pace and attack, and in the end this approach becomes exhausting: you may yield to the film's verve while still praying that it will all be over soon.—A.L. (7/22/96) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema I, East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, and State.)

Walking and Talking—In Nicole Holofcener's fresh and accomplished début comedy, Catherine Keener plays Amelia, a thirtyish New Yorker who thinks she's ready to quit therapy because it's been a few months since she was obsessed with a man; Anne Heche is her best friend, Laura, whose announcement that she's about to marry sends Amelia into a panic. Cinematically speaking, the movie is somewhat tame, but Holofcener's writing is trenchant and often hilarious, and the actors are fine, especially Keener, who has the tragic eyes, huge, hopeful smile, and beautifully awkward timing of a classic clown. It's nice, too, to see a movie about female friendship that doesn't stoop: at no point do the two women catfight over fame, money, or a man. With Liev Schreiber as Amelia's sometime boyfriend, Todd Field as Laura's fiancé, and Kevin Corrigan—another brilliant clown—in the poignant-repulsive role of Bill, the geeky video-store clerk Amelia turns to for comfort.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

ACROSS THE SEA OF TIME: Lincoln Square. . . . **ANTONIA'S LINE:** Cinema 3. . . . **THE ARRIVAL:** Manhattan Twin and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE BIRDCAGE** (reviewed in our issue of 3/18/96): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BLADE RUNNER:** Cinema Village. . . . **CELESTIAL CLOCKWORK:** Carnegie Hall Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **COLD COMFORT FARM** (5/13/96): Quad Cinema and Regency. . . . **DRAGONHEART:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **ERASER** (7/8/96): New York Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **FLIRTING WITH DISASTER** (4/15/96): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **HARRIET THE SPY:** Lincoln Square, New York Twin, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **HEAVEN'S PRISONERS:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HEAVY** (6/17/96): Film Forum. . . . **JANE EYRE:** 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **JOHNNY SHORTWAVE:** Film Forum. . . . **KAZAAM:** 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 3, 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **MAYBE . . . MAYBE NOT:** The Screening Room. . . . **MIGHTY APHRODITE** (10/30/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE POMPATUS OF LOVE:** Cinema 3rd Avenue and Village East Cinemas. . . . **PURPLE NOON:** Paris. . . . **THE ROCK** (6/17/96): 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 4, Lincoln Square, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **SPY HARD:** Manhattan Twin. . . . **STEALING BEAUTY** (6/10/96): Angelika 57, Angelika Film Center, and Beekman. . . . **STRIPTEASE:** Criterion Center and Gemini. . . . **THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS AND DOGS:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE** (5/27/96): Angelika Film Center and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Baronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini, Second Ave. at 64th St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

The Baker's Wife (1938)—The village baker (Raimu) cannot work because he laments his wife's departure with a stupid, sexy shepherd; the villagers, who want their bread, organize to bring her back. Raimu's baker is an acting classic—a true tragicomic hero. Marcel Pagnol, a playwright who turned scenarist and then writer-director, adapted this classic of cuckoldry from Jean Giono's "Jean le Bleu" and directed it very simply. With Ginette Leclerc (who can pout with her mouth open) as the wife; Charpin; and Charles Moulin. In French.—P.K. (Florence Gould Hall; Aug. 6.)

Beauty and the Beast (1946)—Jean Cocteau's first full-length movie (he wrote and directed it) is perhaps the most sensuously elegant of all filmed fairy tales. As a child escapes from everyday family life to the magic of a storybook, so, in the film, Beauty's farm, with its Vermeer simplicity, fades in intensity as we are caught up in the Gustave Doré extravagance of the Beast's enchanted landscape. In Christian Bérard's makeup, Jean Marais is a magnificent Beast; Beauty's self-sacrifice to him holds no more horror than a satisfying romantic fantasy should have. The transformation of the Beast into Prince Charming is ambiguous—what we have gained cannot quite take the place of what we have lost. (When shown the film, Greta Garbo is reported to have said at the end, "Give me back my Beast.") The delicate Josette Day is, quite properly, Beauty. In French—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 5.)

Forbidden Planet (1956)—The best of the science-fiction interstellar productions of the fifties lifted its plot and atmosphere from Shakespeare: the magical island of "The Tempest" becomes the planet Altair-4, where the sky is green and the sand is pink and there are two moons. The magician Prospero becomes the mad scientist Morbius (Walter Pidgeon); Prospero's daugher, Miranda, who knows no man except her father, is Altaira (Anne Francis); and (though this is less clear) the sprite Ariel becomes Robby, the friendly robot. Caliban has become a marvellously flamboyant monster out of Freud—pure id. It's a pity the film, directed by Fred Wilcox, didn't lift some of Shakespeare's dialogue: it's hard to believe you're in the heavens when the diction of the hero (Leslie Nielsen) and his spaceshipmates flattens you down to Kansas.—P.K. (Bryant Park; Aug. 5.)

Ivanhoe (1952)—What a ruckus! Everybody in twelfth-century England is fighting everybody else. The Normans, who have pledged their allegiance to Prince John (Guy Rolfe), are at war with the Saxons, who are committed to Richard the Lion-Hearted (Norman Wooland), and the Saxon hero Wilfred of Ivanhoe (Robert Taylor) is trying to raise the ransom money to free Richard from his foreign captors. Ivanhoe is also attentive to the fair Rowena (Joan Fontaine) and to the dark, sensitive Jewish outcast Rebecca (Elizabeth Taylor). Elizabeth Taylor, just turned twenty, is so eerily beautiful that Fontaine, ordinarily a great beauty in her own right, seems pallid and smarmy. The big clash between Ivanhoe and the villain (George Sanders) is unaccountably brutal—they go at each other with axes and heavy spiked balls attached to chains. No one could say this wasn't a rousing movie. It's also romantic, big, commercial, and slick, in the M-G-M grand manner. Directed by Richard Thorpe; screenplay by Noel Langley, from the Walter Scott novel.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Aug. 3-4.)

The Misfits (1961)—An erratic, sometimes personal in the wrong way, and generally unlucky picture that is often affecting. Arthur Miller wrote the screenplay (from a story he'd published in *Esquire*) about contemporary cowboys—"misfits" in the film's symbolism—who hunt down wild horses and sell them to be butchered for dog food. Marilyn Monroe is a lonely, emotionally unstable divorcée who is deeply upset by the men’s determination to capture the horses. Monroe had never worked her vulnerability so fulsomely before; the film has an uncomfortable element of fake psychodrama—she’s pushy about her own sensitivity. Clark Gable plays an aging cowhand who falls in love with her, and Montgomery Clift is particularly engaging in the smaller role of a cowhand-rodeo rider with mother troubles. If there is a right tone in which to play the Miller script, the director, John Huston, doesn’t find it. With Eli Wallach and Thelma Ritter.—P.K. (Film al Fresco; Aug. 4.)

Thérèse (1986)—Shot in a diorama in a richly austere visual style—the actors appear against a mottled, opaque backdrop—this Alain Cavalier film is undoubtedly a feast of some sort. (But perhaps it’s no more than an art curiosity.) It concentrates our attention on the bare, masterly images (lighted by Philippe Rousselot) that come out of the darkness, and on tiny sounds and whispered bits of conversation. The script, by Cavalier and his daughter, Camille de Casabiance, is a minimalist version of the story of the young girl who at fifteen got permission to enter the Carmelite order, died of tuberculosis in 1897, at twenty-four, and was canonized and became popular as St. Theresa of Lisieux, the Little Flower of Jesus, and the model of the pure woman. (This is at least the fourth French movie she has inspired.) What Cavalier’s version gives us is the beaming eagerness of a girl (Catherine Mouchet) who seems born to be a nun. She takes completely literally her marriage to Christ, and burns with love for her bridegroom. For Thérèse, carnal passion and spiritual passion seem fused. But Cavalier’s formal, noncommittal style is too measured for you to get any sense that you’re observing life in a convent. He walls off Thérèse’s inner struggle, and since nothing happens to her outwardly she becomes only an aesthetic or possibly erotic object. And after a while the film’s austerity may begin to seem as repressive as the cloistered life. In French.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 6.)

Three on a Match (1933)—Bette Davis, Joan Blondell, and Ann Dvorak (who goes through some steamy emotions) are the girls who grew up together and, after several years, meet again in the big city. At lunch one day, they light three cigarettes on one match, and, according to the superstition (which is said to have been invented and publicized by Ivar Kreuger, the Swedish match king), there’s bad luck ahead. A modest, entertaining little melodrama from Warners, directed by Mervyn LeRoy. With Warren William, Glenda Farrell, Lyle Talbot, Humphrey Bogart, Patricia Ellis, Edward Arnold, Jack La Rue, Grant Mitchell, Clara Blandick, and Allen Jenkins. Written by Lucien Hubbard, Kubec Glasmon, and John Bright.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Aug. 3.)

The Tin Drum (1980)—Volker Schlöndorff’s cool, craftsmanlike version of Günter Grass’s grotesque picaresque chronicle about a midget in Nazi-dominated Europe. The filmmaker reduces Grass’s unholy hybrid of psychology, history, and myth to a sociological parable of petit-bourgeois greed and complacency. What starts out like an exciting blend of Imagist poem and punk extravaganza, with elements that resemble R. Crumb cartoons and adolescent-horror films like “Carrie,” becomes a thin, shaky allegory, held together only by the presence of David Bennent in the role of Grass’s anti- (and mini-) hero, Oskar. He emerges as a sort of dirty Peter Panski, looking alternately like a haunted innocent and a child from the Village of the Damned. Angela Winkler, as Oskar’s mother, Mario Adorf, as her husband, and Daniel Olbrychski, as her lover, bring some warmth (or at least some friction) to the script, which was written by Schlöndorff, Jean-Claude Carrière, and Franz Seitz in collaboration with Grass. Igor Luther did the hair-raising, hyperbolic cinematography. In German.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; starting Aug. 2.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through Aug. 1: “Picnic” (1955, Joshua Logan), with William Holden and Kim Novak. . . . From Aug. 2: “The Tin Drum” (†).

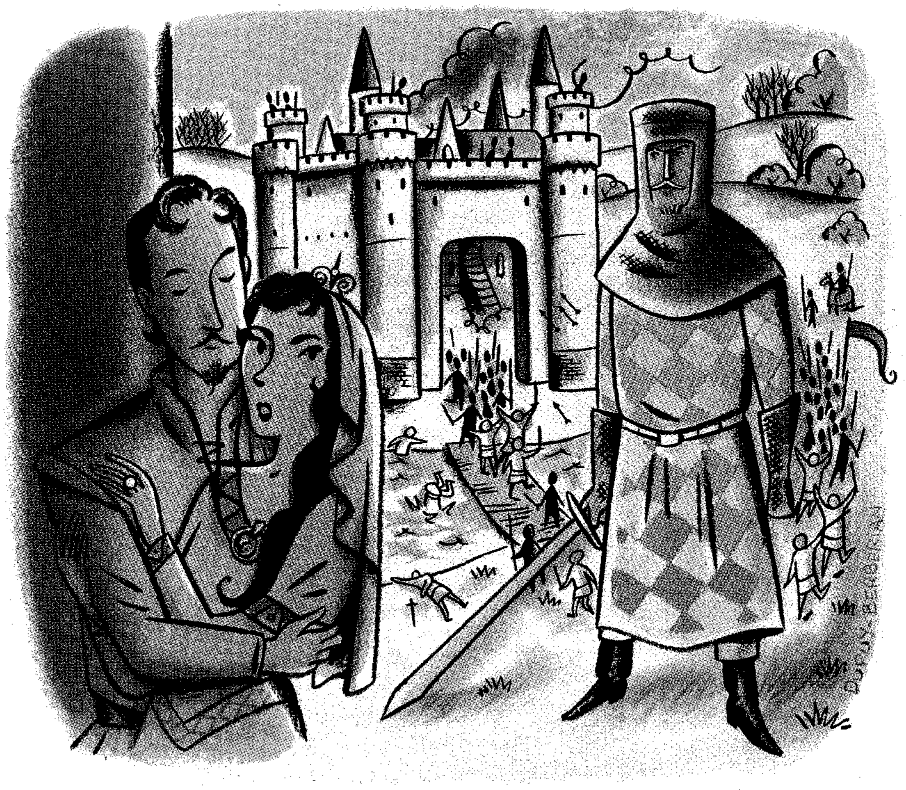
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280)—A program of films directed by Satyajit Ray, all in Bengali. Through Aug. 1: “The World of Apu” (1959). . . . From Aug. 2: “The Music Room” (1959).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A showing of films from the museum’s Martin Scorsese Collection. Aug. 1 at 2:30: “Cheyenne Autumn” (1964, John Ford). . . . Aug. 1 at 6: “Man in the Saddle” (1951, André de Toth), with Randolph Scott. . . . Aug. 1 at 8: "Shane" (1953, George Stevens), with Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur, Brandon deWilde, Van Heflin, and Jack Palance. . . . Aug. 2 at 2:30: “Streets of Laredo” (1949, Leslie Fenton), with William Holden, Macdonald Carey, and Mona Freeman. . . . Aug. 2 at 6 and Aug. 4 at 3: “Captain Lightfoot” (1955, Douglas Sirk), with Rock Hudson, Barbara Rush, and Jeff Morrow. . . . Aug. 2 at 8 and Aug. 4 at 12:30: “The Black Rose” (1950, Henry Hathaway), with Tyrone Power, Cecile Aubry, and Orson Welles. . . . Aug. 3 at 1 and Aug. 4 at 5: “Ivanhoe” (†). . . . Aug. 3 at 3 and Aug. 5 at 6: “The Crimson Pirate” (1952, Robert Siodmak), with Burt Lancaster. . . . Aug. 3 at 5 and Aug. 5 at 2:30: “Prince of Foxes” (1949, Henry King), with Tyrone Power, Wanda Hendrix, and Welles. . . . Aug. 6 at 2:30: “Flying Leathernecks” (1951, Nicholas Ray), with John Wayne, Robert Ryan, and Jay C. Flippen. . . . Aug. 6 at 6: “Halls of Montezuma” (1950, Lewis Milestone), with Richard Widmark, Palance, and Robert Wagner.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Through Aug. 4: The Fifth New York Video Festival. . . . ¶ A program of French films based on French novels, plays, or short stories. Aug. 5 at 4 and 7:45: “Beauty and the Beast” (†). . . . Aug. 5 at 6 and 9:30: “Eyes Without a Face” (1959, Georges Franju), with Pierre Brasseur, Alida Valli, and Edith Scob. . . . Aug. 6 at 4 and 8: “Letters from My Windmill” (1954, Marcel Pagnol), with Roger Crouzet. . . . Aug. 6 at 6:15: “Thérèse” (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films directed by Mervyn LeRoy. Aug. 3 at 2: “Three on a Match” (†). . . . Aug. 3 at 4: “Elmer the Great” (1933), with Joe E. Brown. . . . Aug. 4 at 2: “Hard to Handle” (1933), with James Cagney. . . . Aug. 4 at 4: “They Won’t Forget” (1937), with Claude Rains.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Aug. 6 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: “The Baker’s Wife” (†).



Robert Taylor, Elizabeth Taylor, and George Sanders in “Ivanhoe.”

DUPUY - BERBERIAN

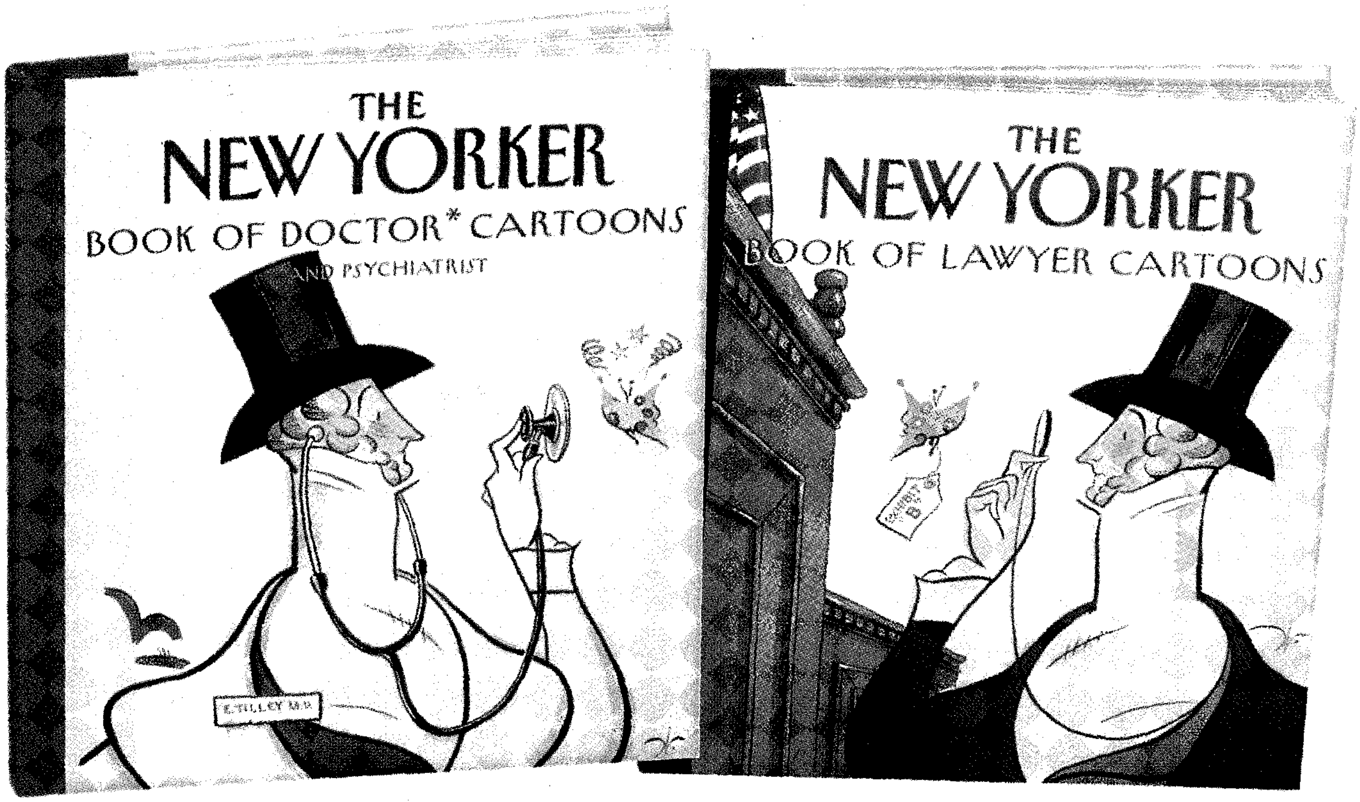
Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes, coming attractions, and newsreels. The feature on Aug. 5 will be “Forbidden Planet” (†). (Rain date is the following night.)

Film al Fresco, at Le Madri Restaurant, 168 W. 18th St. (727-8022)—Sunday evenings, more films out-of-doors, with food and live music beginning at 6 and the movie starting at about 8:30. On Aug. 4, the feature will be “The Misfits” (†). (Rain date is the following night.)

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Aug. 4 at 7, the feature will be “Kitten with a Whip” (1964, Douglas Heyes), with Ann-Margret and John Forsythe.

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—A program of African films. July 31 at 3: “Harvest 3000” (1975, Haile Gerima; Ethiopia). . . . July 31 at 6:30: “Chronicle of the Year of Embers” (1975, Muhammad Lakhdar-Hamima; Algeria). . . . Aug. 6 at 3: “Neria” (1992, Godwin Mawuru; Zimbabwe). . . . Aug. 6 at 6:30: “Ta Dona” (1991, Adama Drabo; Mali).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—“Karaoke” and “Cold Lazarus,” the final works by writer Dennis Potter (1935-94), are being shown at the museum on a rotating basis. Aug. 1-2 at 6 and Aug. 3-4 at 2: “Karaoke” (1996, Renny Rye), with Albert Finney, Saffron Burrows, and Hywel Bennett.



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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

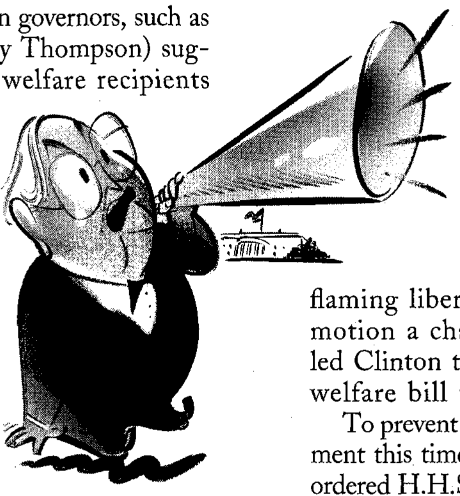
WASHINGTON'S LAST LOUD LIBERAL

TWENTY-FOUR hours after the United States Senate voted to scrap the federal guarantee of cash welfare for poor children, Daniel Patrick Moynihan was in his office in the Capitol, indulging in one of the three Marlboros he allows himself each day, and in another of his most comforting rituals: the diagnosis of a Democratic myopia so severe it borders on blindness. "Al Gore should be chastised," Moynihan said. "On 'Face the Nation,' he said that this whole business about the importance of A.F.D.C."—Aid to Families with Dependent Children—"is 'exaggerated'; that what we need are vouchers so that mothers can buy diapers. *Diapers*? No! No! No! We are about to repeal part of the Social Security Act of 1935, and Democrats are talking about *diapers*? Forget the diapers: what about the rent?"

For more than thirty years, Senator Moynihan has been lecturing his partisan allies—and anyone else in earshot—about welfare, and particularly about its relationship to the calamitous disintegration of the black family. He has been called a racist, a victim-blamer, a neoconservative, a neoliberal, and even (by Irving Kristol) a "revisionist progressive": anything, that is, but a man of the left. This week, however, as the Republican welfare bill hits President Clinton's desk, presenting him with the politically loaded choice of whether or not to wield his veto pen, it is Moynihan who stands as the main defender of a welfare system that everyone, himself included, considers a disaster. Suddenly, he has become—on the issue of poverty, at least—Washington's last loud liberal.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIC PALMA

To Moynihan, the label seems a touch misleading, for nothing about the Republican welfare plan is, by any plausible definition, conservative. In seeking to combat an array of economic and social pathologies, the plan would impose strict time limits and work requirements, and cut sixty billion dollars in aid to the poor over six years. Yet, as Moynihan points out, the pathologies in question—not least the spiralling rate of out-of-wedlock births—remain mysterious, while the proposed remedies have never been tested. Meanwhile, virtually all available evidence (and the testimony of several welfare-reforming Republican governors, such as Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson) suggests that moving welfare recipients from the dole into work costs more money, not less.



Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Given all this, it isn't surprising that some of the sharpest criticisms of the G.O.P.'s plan have come from conservative intellectuals, such as Lawrence Mead and James Q. Wilson, who realize that, as Moynihan put it, "because we don't understand what is happening, this is a risk that no responsible person could take." What is surprising, though, is the mute response of liberals. Last week, when the Senate passed its bill, half the Democrats sided with the G.O.P. A week earlier, a majority of Democrats in the House voted for a bipartisan welfare measure, which, like the Republican one, would end the sixty-year-old entitlement of poor children to cash aid. And through it all hardly a peep was heard from what Moynihan once called "those vaunted, flaunted advocacy groups" on the left, such as the Children's Defense Fund. "Apart from the Catholic bishops, the silence and passivity have been inexplicable, and shocking," Moynihan said, tugging at his trademark bow tie.

Moynihan, of course, has been here before. A year ago, when the Republicans were on the brink of passing their first version of welfare reform, Clinton had signalled his willingness to sign a bill similar to the one the Senate was considering. Then Moynihan learned of a study by the Department of Health and Human Services which showed that the Senate bill would push a million children into poverty, and publicly accused the White House of suppressing it. Days later, the study was leaked to the Los Angeles *Times*, inflaming liberals and setting in motion a chain of events that led Clinton to veto the G.O.P. welfare bill twice last winter.

To prevent a similar embarrassment this time, the White House ordered H.H.S. not to analyze the new bills. Undaunted, Moynihan and others urged the Urban Institute, whose statistical model was used to produce the H.H.S. report, to come up with fresh numbers. The numbers turned out to be equally depressing: the House version of the G.O.P. proposal would increase the number of poor children by more than a million. The question, however, is whether such calculations stand much chance against the kind that turn mainly on electoral advantage. Among Clinton's political advisers, there is a strong sentiment, voiced vehemently by Dick Morris, that the President who promised to "end welfare as we know it" should not risk yet another veto of a plan that would (whatever else might be said of it) do just that. At the same time, those who take the opposite view seem, to put it mildly, to have trouble getting Clinton's ear. "Everyone in the Administration who thinks that he should veto the bill has been either locked out or muzzled," a liberal official says, noting also that potential critics on the outside, such as the N.A.A.C.P., have recently embraced Clinton rather than make clear the political costs of signing the G.O.P. proposal.

On Capitol Hill, Moynihan's concern is palpable, but so is his detachment—the very detachment that has led many critics to accuse him of being a fine thinker, and an even finer eccentric, but not much of a politician. "Liberals were never prepared to counter the inversion of rhetoric that's taken place—this way of saying, 'We're doing this to help children,' " he said. "In fact, the liberals in this Administration encouraged it. Now even if the President vetoes the bill, it'll be back next year. The country has come to mistake the symptoms of social breakdown for the causes, and for that, I'm afraid, there's plenty of blame to go around."

MAKING BALZAC PAY

Book publishing has not been a gentleman's profession for quite some time, and Michael Naumann, the new publisher of the almost primly respectable Henry Holt, says that he has no qualms about what he calls "the market aspect of this industry." Translated, this means that Naumann will have no more compunction than the next publisher about throwing large amounts of money at the marquee names of literature. He got the publishing industry's attention last month when he pried Salman Rushdie away from the author's American publisher, Pantheon, paying a reported two and a half million dollars (a figure Naumann calls "wildly exaggerated") for Rushdie's next book and for the paperback rights to three other books, including "The Satanic Verses." Earlier this year—before Naumann arrived—Holt won the right to publish Thomas Pynchon's new novel, which will come out next spring. (Little, Brown had long been Pynchon's publisher.) Suddenly, Holt was a player.

But the vulgar delights of being a player, keen though they are, are a long way from the love of books, which still impels some people into publishing. And Michael Naumann appears to be one such person. He was born near Berlin in 1941, went to high school in Missouri thanks to an exchange program, returned to Germany to teach philosophy and political science, and worked as a journalist before going into book publishing, a decade ago. He has a light and pleasing accent, an Old World patience and politesse, and a graceful way of turning aside questions with charming stories about his authors, his travels, and people he has known. But he can send up a flare when he wants to. In his office on West Eighteenth Street recently, when the conversation turned to the Pulitzer Prize-winning author Richard Ford, he said, as he did of several other authors, "He's a good friend." One of your authors? "He may be someday," Naumann replied with half a smile. This may come as a surprise to Ford's current publisher, Knopf.

Michael Naumann

Naumann draws a sharp distinction between aggressive pursuit and piracy. "I am not aiming for Richard Ford," he says. "In fact, I was not aiming for Salman—he was offered to me." Rushdie's agent, Andrew Wylie, confirms that this is the case. What's more, Naumann had proved his commitment to Rushdie's work by helping to organize a consortium in Germany to publish "The Satanic Verses" after the original publisher dropped it.

In ten years at the helm of Rowohlt, one of Germany's largest book firms, Naumann published major American authors, including John Updike, Toni Morrison, Paul Auster, and Ford. Naumann says that one author who now has a contract with Penguin has indicated that she would like to move to Holt, but he does not want to violate his long friendship with Penguin's publisher, Peter Mayer. Since Mayer is about to retire, though, a "natural situation," as Naumann puts it, may arise soon enough.

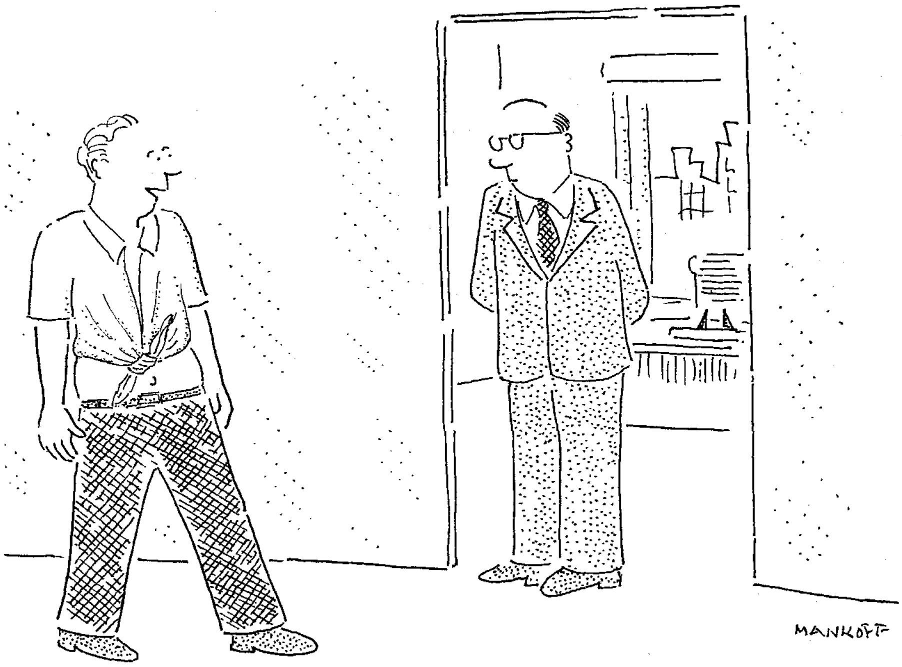
Naumann's appointment seems to be part of a broad strategy. Holt has been owned for the last decade by Holtzbrinck, a family-controlled German media giant with large investments in newspapers, radio, and television. Over the past two years, Holtzbrinck has moved into the higher echelons of American publishing by buying Farrar, Straus & Giroux and a controlling interest in Macmillan U.K., the parent of St. Martin's. In publishing, Naumann says, the company has "never gone for quick bucks," instead buying up distinguished houses that distribute the works of classic authors. It all sounds rather civilized. "I don't have to have a bottom line every three or four months," says Naumann, who apparently also does not have to wear a jacket and tie, or schedule his appointments in fifteen-minute intervals. "This doesn't mean that I can live in splendor. This company cannot live endlessly from profits of other branches of the Holtzbrinck Group."

Naumann does not see why he can't be both civilized and profitable. He fondly recalls the example of Ernst Rowohlt, the founder of the firm that Naumann used to run. Rowohlt made a fortune from the improbable expedient of selling cheap leather-bound editions of the complete works of Balzac. "He was a man who gave big parties in Berlin during the Weimar Republic," Naumann says. "So he would always raise his glass to the authors sitting at these huge tables getting drunk, and he would shout, 'Balzac pays!' " Naumann half rises for an imaginary toast—a toast to money and to literature.

SERIF SLEUTH

Around the time that Joe Klein, the "Primary Colors" author and *Newsweek* columnist, was working out the details of a management-imposed vacation from the magazine, Maureen Casey Owens, the document examiner who helped peg Klein as Anonymous, was sitting in her Wilmington, North Carolina, office, wondering what all the fuss was about. "For me, it was just another handwriting case," Owens said.

Document examiners are a subculture of fastidious, highly specialized forensic scientists who leave no piece of loose-leaf unturned to nab their prey. Owens, who is fifty-six, spent twenty-five years in the laboratory of the Chicago Police Department, including thirteen years as chief document examiner, and worked on approximately two hundred murder cases. In



"Summertime, chief, an' the livin' is easy."

• •

1987, she went into private practice, and she now spends most of her time on civil cases, figuring out the clever and often not so clever ways that people alter or fabricate wills, contracts, insurance policies, and other potentially lucrative documents. Occasionally, a high-profile case comes along. In 1993, she helped prove that the highly touted "Diary of Jack the Ripper" was "not genuine," as she put it. And in early July she received a call from the Washington *Post* writer David Streitfeld regarding the matter of Anonymous.

There is no such thing as a degree in document examination; those who aspire to the profession must learn under the tutelage of an experienced hand. Owens apprenticed for three years to earn her credentials. Every five years, she must be recertified, to show that she is up on the latest gadgetry and know-how.

Private document examiners labor in solitude, like authors and academics. Their primary tool is the stereoscopic microscope, which helps them distinguish the details of a writer's style—the proportion and form of letters, the telltale flares, the variations in pen pressure. They can trace a copy to a single photocopier, the way a ballistics expert might link a bullet to a gun. They can tell what kind of printer produced a particular document, and they have high-tech tools to help them compare inks. "Two inks may look the same on paper," Owens said, "but under infrared light they could look totally different."

In the case of Anonymous, the process was relatively straightforward. Owens had a sample of Klein's writing, which she compared with notes on an early draft of "Primary Colors," a book she has yet to read. Examination through the microscope revealed "a tendency toward an open lowercase 'a' with a slight right-hand serif," Owens said, and "a wide 'w' with a low center and a curved ending movement," not to mention an "open 'g' with a straight downstroke." Four days after receiving the writing samples, Owens called Streitfeld with her finding. The two samples, she said, were "entirely consistent"; they had their man.

YARDBIRDS

ONCE a year on a summer Saturday, Bloomsbury, New Jersey, a tiny town on the far side of the state, stages a town-wide yard sale and turns itself into Portobello Road. Every picture-perfect lawn is cluttered with card tables, picnic tables, and coffee tables laden with objects for sale. Big things—an electric stove, a bedroom set—stand in driveways. The event is a benefit: Bloomsburyites earn the right to deaccession their domestic overflow by contributing eight dollars to the Bloomsbury Elementary School Parent Teachers Organization.

Anita Tietjen, a tall woman with a broad, thoughtful face, who is selling from a van parked in front of her friend Sue Crowell's house, gestures toward the road, where lines of slow-moving cars trickle between rows of parked cars while dense streams of pedestrians move purposefully, if sluggishly, along the narrow bluestone-flag sidewalks. "They come to buy," she says.

They come singly, in pairs, and in family groups pushing strollers or pulling wagons that hold their offspring and their purchases. They bring shopping carts and shopping bags. Here and there, a customer staggers, trying to manage the unmanageable—an elaborate plant stand, a pair of window frames.

What do they buy? What kids outgrow: clothing, cribs, tricycles. Matings that tell their own story: a pair of crutches beside a pair of skis. Mementos of technological progress (manual typewriters), rustic gear (milk cans), kitchen equipment (especially Tupperware), collectibles that are not yet antiques (a 1976 license plate celebrating the Bicentennial), and decorative objects known to the trade as "smalls" and to the public as "tchotchkes."

New York City apartment dwellers may wonder where Bloomsburyites keep all this stuff between sales. Sue Crowell keeps hers in the attic. When the display on her lawn thins out, she sends a lanky son to bring down an upholstered stool and a doll's high chair. Why don't the attics ever empty? Because Bloomsburyites don't just sell, they buy. Mrs. Crowell says, "One year, I made enough at this sale to buy my dining-room set."

"There's a market for everything," says Larry Ashwell, who is selling from a porch next door to Mrs. Crowell. "This year, I had a casserole cover without a casserole for fifty cents, and somebody bought it."

"But you have to be patient," Mrs. Tietjen adds. As if to illustrate this dictum, a woman stops, picks up a pair of life-size pottery doves, and presses a bill into Mrs. Tietjen's hand. "You see?" Mrs. Tietjen says. "I've had that pair out for three years." For native sons and daughters who lack patience, Bloomsbury offers an alternative. "*Next* Saturday is Bloomsbury Cleanup Day," Mrs. Tietjen says. "We put out Dumpsters." ♦

"Washington's Last Loud Liberal," John Heilemann; "Making Balzac Pay," James Traub; "Serif Sleuth," Warren St. John; "Yardbirds," Naomi Bliven.

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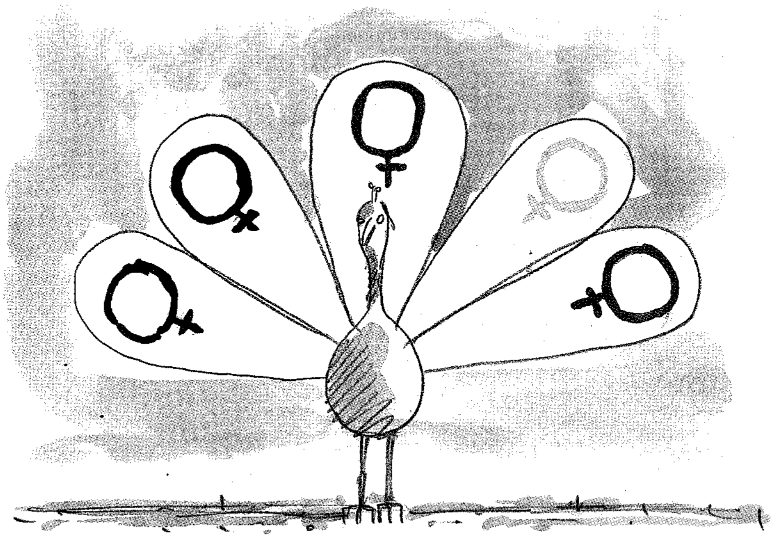
LETTER FROM ATLANTA

INSIDE-OUT OLYMPICS

The NBC strategy that made the Games a hit.

BY DAVID REMNICK

FOOLISH me, I nearly missed the story of the Olympic Games. For days, I moved from one event to the next, unaware all the while of the grand narrative being shaped on television. The Olympics that I was watching, day after day, event after event, had no more to do with the Games being seen at home on NBC than visiting a soundstage in Hollywood has to do with seeing a final print of "Independence Day." At the arenas, I knew precious little about anyone's cancer or ruined leg; I never got to meet anyone's dying best friend or inspirational coach; no one mentioned Amanda Beard's Teddy bear or Tom Dolan's asthma. Nor did I see the tender story about Gary Hall, Jr., and his imprisoned grandfather, the savings-and-loan swindler Charles Keating. I was watching games and accumulating results, but I was not, it turned out, *relating* to them in an optimal way.



NBC turns sports into soap opera, and guess which audience it's targeting?

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

As these Olympics began, NBC was getting extraordinary ratings. And for good reason. The network has done away with the existing reality and provided a new one. What it has come up with is a sentimental, highly elastic narrative style designed to bring a tear to the eye and bullion to the coffers. On the night of the American victory in women's gymnastics, the network mise-en-scène took an event that had actually ended in the early evening (a dead zone for television), held back Kerri Strug's final hobbling vault until a few minutes before midnight, and won the best Olympic ratings since 1976. Part of the ratings success is due to the fact that the Games are being held in the United States, but why else? What was the secret behind this narrative strategy? What were the principles behind NBC's amalgam of sport and melodrama?

NBC executives working at the International Broadcasting Center told me in tones of academic seriousness that their success was based on a scientific campaign to shape their broadcasts to a feminine sensibility. Bob Costas, the network's puckish anchor for the Games, said that in non-Olympic years the ratings for sports like track and swimming "can be detected only with a microscope." But by giving the audience a sense of occasion and a rooting interest in the Games, by establishing in the viewer a sense of empathy for an athlete and his or her trials (defeats, illness, accidents, etc.), the network would cause women, especially, to flock to the screen. (Men, being men, would be there already, a Bud in one mitt and the clicker in the other.) The Olympic audience so far has been fifty per cent women, thirty-five per cent men, and fifteen per cent children and teen-agers of both sexes. Television has even managed to transform figure skating into a ratings giant in non-Olympic years.

Dick Ebersol, who runs NBC Sports, learned the rudiments of the "up-close and personal" approach at ABC three decades ago, when he was working as a researcher for Roone Arledge, who invented that phrase and the concept behind it. "To get ready for the Games in Grenoble and Mexico City, I went around the world preparing briefing books, so that you'd know that, say, the Dutch shooter's parents had been resistance fighters," Ebersol told me. "That made the athlete vulnerable. It gave you a connection." At NBC, Ebersol helped invent "Saturday Night Live" and also "Saturday Night's Main Event," a professional wrestling show, before taking over the sports division. Inspired by his days with Arledge, Ebersol has developed a mantra for NBC: while men enjoy sports "from the outside in"—that is, they want the event itself and then, possibly, some connection with the people involved—women come to sports "from the inside out." Before they can get interested in an event, they need to know the characters and sympathize with them. For women, winning and losing are secondary; *story* is the main thing.

If Ebersol needed further proof that a "male" approach to the Games was a ratings disaster, he had only to look at the 1988 Olympics, in Seoul, when NBC tried to cram as many events as possible on the air and lost the female audience. NBC has paid three billion five hundred and fifty-five million dollars to broadcast five of the next six Olympics, so there is a great deal of money riding on Ebersol's reading of the audience. Since 1990, his director of research, Nicholas Schiavone, has presided over ten thousand interviews with potential viewers in order to find out how to get precisely the kind of ratings that NBC is now enjoying. Schiavone worked up a memorandum—verily, a creed—of five principles that "correspond to the five Olympic rings" and "serve as the foundation of the NBC Olympic television philosophy."

Ring I, Story: Viewers want a narrative momentum, a story that builds. Stories make connections with reality, among facts, and between the subject and the viewer. This is what the viewer takes away from the telecast.

Ring II, Reality: Perhaps the major hook for Olympic viewers is the unscripted drama of the Olympics, the idea that anything can happen, both of an athletic nature and a human nature. People look for real stories and relatability, things that apply to them. They are looking for real life and real emotion presented credibly.

Ring III, Possibility: This ring covers the feeling of self-realization. The audience experiences the rise of individuals from ordinary athletes and their humble beginnings to the company of the world's élite. This identification reinforces belief in their own ability to achieve. This embodiment of possibility gives the viewer a reason he or she can "make it through."

Ring IV, Idealism: The Olympics are still viewed by a vast majority in the contexts of purity and honor. They appeal to what is best in us. This area summarizes the viewers' need to integrate the intellectual and the emotional.

Ring V, Patriotism: Love of country is not just limited to an American viewer's love of the United States. National honor and Olympic tradition seem to go hand in hand. The viewer recognizes the love of his or her own country, but at the same time respects the international athletes' love of their nation as well.

Ebersol's feminine Olympics is a highly artificial construct, designed for maximum sentiment and ratings. It is no less artificial than Leni Riefenstahl's film of the 1936 Games, in Berlin, or Kon Ichikawa's film of the 1964 Games, in Tokyo, which were both designed for maximum sentiment of different sorts. Ebersol said his goal was not so much to broadcast a series of sporting events as to create "a virtual community"—a family event, based not on journalistic values but on "story values." It hardly matters, for example, that so few of the contests are broadcast live; it is enough that they seem live, that they be, in the network's term, "plausibly live."

Schiavone, for his part, told me, "In interviews, people will say they want all sports and all live. But you have to listen to what people mean more than what they say. What they really want is not live but alive; not sports but stories about sports."

When I asked Schiavone if, after all his research, he had a sense of why women and men might be so different in their approach to television and sports, he laughed nervously and said, "Because God made them that way? You are asking a question about the human soul. There are three elements of human nature, and I like to call them 'think, feel, do.' It's my feeling—and our research shows this—that there is a particularly male way of 'think, feel, do' and a particularly female way of 'think, feel, do.' I think it's partly the genetic code, but I think that society also encourages the two different perspectives, because they are complementary—the emotional dimension and the rational dimension."

Schiavone conceded that he sometimes got booed when he talked about this theory of human nature in front of various groups. But, since NBC, the country's leading network, seems to accept this understanding of the soul, I asked Schiavone to tell me more about it.

"I don't think we've ever talked about this in public, but the truth is we use a human-temperament approach to television, and the truth is we do it in prime time and on news, too," he said. "We have thirteen aesthetic principles of prime time and thirteen 'TV experience' principles, but let me break it down this way. Everything has to be the two 'R's—real and relatable. Even the stories on 'Star Trek' were somehow real—they found the universal in the particular. Same thing in news: we have the three 'E's—entertainment, education, edification. News has to speak to the mind and the heart. . . . The Olympics is the model by which the rest of television ought to be done. The Olympics is attuned to human nature. For NBC, the Games add up to seventeen days of consistent addressment to human nature."

In fact, the NBC creed does not depart so much in spirit from a range of feminist theories about differences in gender and narrative. Carol Gilligan, in her 1982 book, "In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development," asserts that, while men base their moral reasoning on an abstract or universal understanding of law and behavior, women are, when shaping moral judgments, more nurturing, more detail-oriented, more attuned to human relationships and context. Gilligan also writes that boys, in their game-playing, emphasize rules and exclusion, while girls are more empathic and try to include everyone. Her theory certainly jibes with the differing characters of the women's basketball team and the hyper-male Dream Team.

NBC's formula for the Games seems to suggest a soap-opera model, a seventeen-day-long, multicharacter, open-ended narrative: it is without the traditional sense of closure inherent in the Super Bowl or other "male-oriented" sporting events. Tania Modleski, a specialist in film theory and narrative forms, writes that there are two main explanations for the female attraction to the soaps, one psychosexual and the other socioeconomic: psychosexual because a soap, like female sexuality, rejects closure and is capable of, yes, multiple climaxes; socioeconomic because the soaps and their narrative style reconcile women at home to the repetitive nature of traditional domestic life. Finally, the NBC creed loses nothing when it's set next to the even more radical ideas of Hélène Cixous, a leading French feminist and philosopher. Cixous says that a feminine style of writing—*"écriture féminine"*—is a narrative approach more about "identification" than "mastery."

While I was sorting through all this, Schiavone called me at my hotel (where I was now monitoring the Games in the proper fashion). He said that after "downing some caffeine" he wanted to "add a concept" to his theory of storytelling and female appeal. "There's a third reason for the differences between the sexes," he said. "It's nature, nurture, and *physiology*. Women bear children, so you can say that the human race comes from 'the inside out.' I wonder if the appeal of the Olympics to women the way we do it, 'inside out,' is that life itself comes from inside out, whereas men take a more externalized approach. You could say we dwell in the tension between male and female, the external and the internal. . . . Anyway, the way I see our version of the Olympics is that it's about—with apologies to Jane Austen—it's about sense and sensibility. It really is."

STILL, it is important to get out of the house. Downtown Atlanta these days evokes a tropical rain forest of the corporate future, a realm of logos instead of trees. Rising above us—the lowly and various beasts, *shvitzing* in our "authorized" Olympic shorts and "fully licensed" Olympic T-shirts—are the looming trees of a new age: thirty-foot-high inflatable beer cans and Atlanta's true Olympic symbol, a sixty-five-foot Coke bottle. Irony is not much in evidence at the Games, but I was glad to meet one vender here who stepped out of the shadows to offer refreshment to the parboiled masses: "Cool water! Two bucks a sip!"

The only way to escape the commercial bombardment was to go to the games themselves; NBC, after all, was not broadcasting around the clock. But, stripped of NBC's authorial aid, I was forced at each event to create my own narrative, albeit a feeble, masculine one. At the Greece-Yugoslavia men's basketball game, I came to admire the Greek center, Panayotis Fassoulas, who is surely the most expressive athlete in modern history. Blessed with a great crag of a nose, enormous bovine eyes, and a rubbery mouth, Fassoulas is able to express infinite varieties of disappointment, outrage, anger, irritation, and annoyance. He succeeded in scoring twenty-one points in what proved to be a losing effort, but I sensed he would do at least as well back home in "Oedipus at Colonus."

Later, I watched an Israeli woman named Czuckermann-Hatuel fence with a German woman named Weber-Koszto, and was crestfallen when the Israeli lost. So was Ms. Czuckermann-Hatuel. At the end of the match, she removed her helmet and let out a silent scream of despair worthy of Munch. I was relieved that she did not fall on her sword. Eventually, I came to see that this narrative was not my own; it was "The Sorrow and the Pity."

Later, at the sixty-four-kilogram men's weight-lifting competition, I sided with Byzantium over the Hellenic ideal, and cheered like mad when Naim (the Pocket Hercules) Suleymanoglu, of Turkey, pulled ahead of his great Greek rival, Valerios Leonidis, to win the gold medal. The two lifters had gone back and forth, trading world-record lifts in a game of "Can You Top This?" With each new record, the crowd went nuts. Suleymanoglu is four feet eleven, weighs a hundred and thirty-one pounds, and hoisted more than four hundred pounds above his head. It was like watching Minnie Pearl throw a piano out a window. I couldn't decide whether this was a male or a female narrative. On the one hand, there was more than one climax. On the other, there was closure. Well, everyone has to sleep sometime.

ONE morning, I drove two hours south to the Georgia-Alabama border to watch the first-ever game of Olympic women's softball. The ballpark was in Columbus, the home of Fort Benning and an infinite number of strip joints, tattoo parlors, and high-end shopping opportunities like Wild Bill's Park-N'-Pawn. It was about a hundred and ten degrees in Columbus—so hot that the ballpark flew a black flag, indicating, it was explained to us, "imminent danger." The State of Georgia, in its quest for good public relations, had suspended the death penalty for the duration of the Games; the governor might have also done something about the United States women's softball team. Facing Puerto Rico, the pitcher, Michele Granger, threw with such force that half the batters seemed to step away from the plate pie-eyed and ready to beat it for San Juan. Dot Richardson, the team's shortstop and a third-year surgery resident, popped a home run over the center-field fence, and before you knew it the score was 10–0. She ran around the bases pumping her fists into the humid air while the Puerto Ricans fairly slumped into the clay. It seemed like major-league closure to me, but that was no doubt my male sense of narrative at work again.

Afterward, the United States women were asked if they minded that NBC, which was broadcasting more than a hundred and fifty hours of the Games, had elected to pass on softball. There was no room for this women's game, it seemed, in Dick Ebersol's feminist miniseries. But Dot Richardson, who had fulfilled her dream of hitting the first home run in an Olympic softball game, could not have been more gracious. "Even if it wasn't on television," she said, "it was still a great moment." ♦

CORRECTION OF THE WEEK

[*From the Newton* (*Mass.*) *News Tribune*]

In the City Beat section of Friday's paper, firefighter Dwight Anderson was misidentified. His nickname in the department is "Dewey." Another firefighter is nicknamed "Weirdo." We apologize for the mistake.

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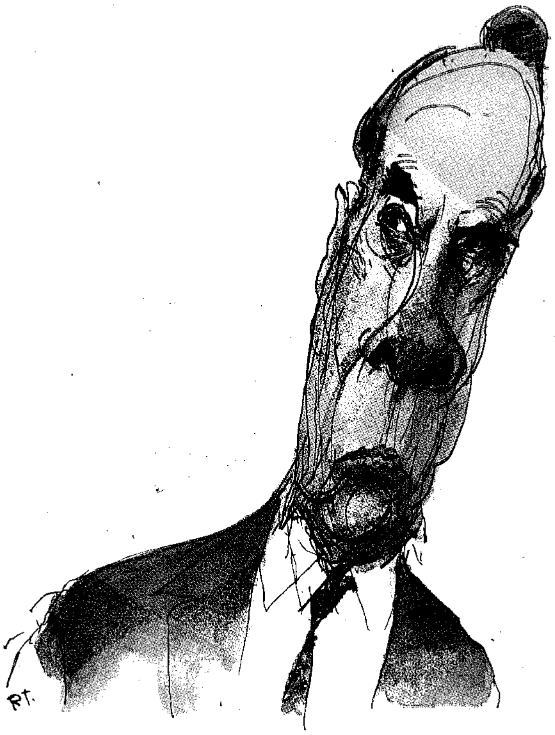
LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

THE MINIMALLY ACCEPTABLE MAN

A subversive bid for the White House.

BY MICHAEL KELLY

By all accounts, including the candidate's, the week of July 14th was a critical one for Bob Dole. It had become redundantly clear to many in the Republican leadership, and even within Dole's own organization, that the campaign of the G.O.P.'s presumptive nominee was sinking fast, and might soon reach a depth from which recovery would be impossible. Often in the past few months it had hardly seemed a campaign at all: bereft of strategy, pedestrian in its tactics, bankrupt of ideas—a sad, lost beast capable of nothing more than lurching blindly from one day to the next. It was so factionalized and disorganized that, as one senior official put it, "the communications shop doesn't talk to the issues shop, which doesn't talk to the speechwriting operation." Having spent nearly the legal limit for the primary season, it was largely dependent on media coverage to get out its message. But what little the campaign possessed in the way of a coherent message was lost in the chaos of its operation, and in the candidate's talent for providing the press with entertaining alternatives to reporting his speeches. The past several weeks had been particularly wretched, and the drumbeat repeating that the Dole candidacy was doomed had become overwhelming. Party leaders and Dole advisers competed for press attention with despairing quotes and dire predictions. In an apocalyptic issue that reached newsstands that week, the conservative *Weekly Standard* all but wrote off the 1996 election, with a cover illustration of Dole as Hamlet staring bleakly at the skull in his hand, under the heading "ALAS, POOR BOB DOLE." On the op-ed pages of the Washington *Times*, columnists muttered of a rebellion at the Convention and urged right-thinking voters to form a dump-Dole movement. In the Democratic camp, joy reigned very nearly supreme. "Right now, things are fine, just fine," one White House political adviser said. "I'm sitting here reading the *Standard*. Let's see, what do we have? 'Bob Dole: Should He Be Hanged?' by Bill Kristol. 'Bob Dole: When Should He Be Hanged?' by Fred Barnes. 'Bob Dole: Hanging's Too Good for Him,' by David Frum." At the tentative suggestion that Bill Clinton's popularity might be peaking too soon, and his commanding lead might vanish as Election Day neared, the adviser laughed a fat and sassy laugh. "Peak too soon? So what?" he said. "So we'll drop from nineteen points up down to twelve? Gee, *tough*. Look, maybe I am feeling a little cocky. I go through the ritual of saying it's going to tighten up, but when people ask why, I just start to giggle. Why is it going to tighten? Because of the econ-



Bob Dole's refusal to properly pretend runs so deep that it cannot be hidden.

RICHARD THOMPSON

omy? I don't think so. Because of how bad our candidate is? I don't think so. Because of how good their candidate is? I don't *think* so."

So this week the Dole campaign was going to launch a new strategy. The strategy had four parts. First, Dole would begin articulating, each week, a policy on what he calls a "dividing and defining" issue. The No. 1 issue, rolled out this week, would be school choice—an idea long championed by Dole's G.O.P.-primary opponent Lamar Alexander. Dole would come out in support of a government program to give parents vouchers that could be used toward the cost of private-school education—a proposal intended to strike a deep chord with working-class voters in general and in particular with Catholics, who may have become the critical mass vote in any seriously contested national-election cycle. The issues drive, as outlined by Dole in an interview, and by senior campaign officials, would hit its high point in early to mid-August, just before the Republican Convention, with the unveiling of an economic plan most likely to be centered on an immediate, across-the-board tax cut by a President Dole and a longer-term effort to restructure the nation's tax code to make taxes "flatter and fairer," as advocated by another primary opponent, Steve Forbes.

Second, Dole would make, as they say, a bold and exciting choice in selecting his running mate (a bold and exciting choice who was a pro-lifer).

Third, the campaign would insure that the Republican Convention of 1996 would be the tonal opposite of the Republican Convention of 1992. Dole would deliver an acceptance speech that would redefine him as a poor kid from Russell, Kansas, who had grown up to go to Washington, like Mr. Smith, and fight for the common good (much as Clinton used his 1992 Convention to launch the "Man from Hope" confection). The Convention's other speakers would be chosen for their ability to portray the G.O.P. as the party of inclusive, tolerant, mainstream conservatives. Apart from Dole, the major speakers would be Colin Powell and Susan Molinari, a personable young Republican congresswoman from Staten Island who is a centrist on the abortion issue, a new mother, and a Catholic. The most significant decision in this regard, (expected to be announced this week) is to deny the podium to Pat Buchanan, whose 1992 speech, declaring America to be in a state of religious war, set the tone for that Convention. "He will not have a speaking role," a senior campaign official said. If Buchanan wished to make a fight out of this, he was welcome to.

Gahan Wilson

"Looks like we grafted a few too many human genes into the kohlrabi."

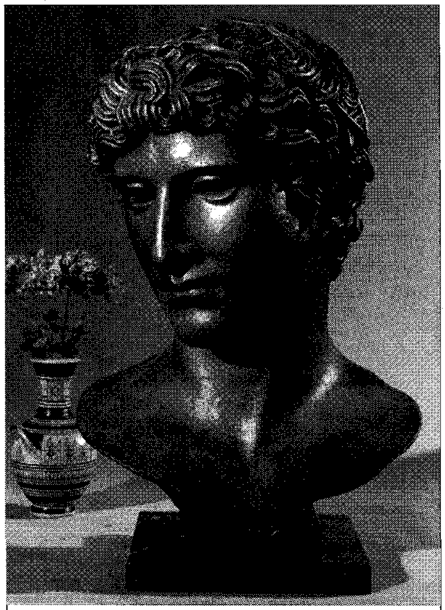
Dole, in a brief talk aboard his campaign plane, Citizen's Ship (né Leader's Ship), made his intentions toward Buchanan and the Buchananite wing of the G.O.P. quite clear. "I don't want to drive anybody out of the Party, but I don't want them to drive anybody out of the Party, either," he said. "And my view is that if we don't reach out and broaden the base, we can't win." When I asked if he wanted a Convention fight with Buchanan, Dole said, "We're not looking for that, but he may be, and if he is it will be hard to avoid." Certainly Dole didn't seem too concerned about finding ways to avoid a scrap. "You know, if we have to jump every hurdle—every time you start looking at a running mate or anything else, you have got to jump the Buchanan barrier—well, I'm not going to. It doesn't seem reasonable to me that somebody who finished a distant, distant second can make those demands." Dole-campaign officials are even more openly hard-nosed. Vin Weber, a campaign co-chairman who has recently taken on an expanded role in the attempt to salvage the disastrously uncoördinated issues operation, said, "The notion that running for President gives you the right to speak at the Convention is nowhere written down. There is no reason we have to put Pat Buchanan or Phil Gramm or anyone else on the platform unless it suits the interests of the candidate and the Party, and if Buchanan wants to lead a walkout we can deal with it."

Fourth, the Dole campaign, coming out of a mainstream Convention and coming, at last, back into the money—seventy-four million dollars in freed contributions and matching federal funds—would deliver a barrage of attack ads designed to belatedly respond to the massive television campaign that the Democrats have waged against Dole and the Republican Congress. (Dole-campaign media trackers say that the combined forces of the Democratic Party and the Clinton-Gore campaign have spent almost forty-three million dollars on television advertising in 1995 and 1996.) "The big thing that has happened to us is that we don't have any money until after the Convention to go on the offensive, and we're getting hammered every day with a different ad," Dole said. "We have to just sort of keep our fingers crossed and hope that on August 15th, when the money rolls in, we'll be ready to—whish!—take off."

That, the Dole people say, with a perhaps somewhat forced cheeriness, should be that. "There is nothing wrong with Bob Dole's campaign that a good economic plan, a good Veep choice, a good Convention speech, and seventy-four million dollars won't cure," said John Buckley, Dole's newly hired director of communications. Maybe. The Dole comeback plan contains a good deal of hopeful thinking and is so basic that in a better-run campaign it would be regarded as a starting point, but it at least has the virtue of existing (a basic strategy is better than no strategy at all), and it isn't stupid. Dole figures that a fairly large number of voters who currently register in polls as supporting his opponent don't really like Clinton, don't believe he has the character to be President, and don't want to vote for him—but have not yet been presented, in the public person of Dole, with a reasonably acceptable alternative. "They know who Bill Clinton is, they don't know who I am," he said, in a tacit admission of his campaign's central failure. "Our focus groups tell us that a lot of people don't know much about me. They know I'm a leader or a senator, or something. Fifty per cent don't even know I was in the military. We've been fairly active over the past year, and people know my name, but they don't know I was active in Social Security or Medicare or Medicaid or food stamps or tax cuts. There's a whole host of things they don't associate with me. I think they view me as some right-wing Republican, some right-winger, and there's a change in perception out there that I think we need." Dole said he is convinced that this situation could change with not too much effort, because of the underlying desire to vote against Clinton. "It's my view, just picking up what I pick up, people are looking for a reason to vote for somebody other than Clinton," he said. People don't trust Clinton, "but they still need a reason to come our way. I don't think they have it yet. Some have it, but not fifty-one per cent."

The public polls suggest that Dole has a point. They show, lying just under Clinton's surface popularity, a deep concern over his moral fitness; a recent *Wall Street Journal*-NBC News poll, for instance, found that sixty-three per cent of those polled were "not confident" of "Bill Clinton's honesty and truthfulness." Given this, it is not inconceivable that by November 5th enough voters could come to think of Dole as a reasonably acceptable alternative to Clinton. And that is all Dole is asking for. He merely wishes to convince voters that he is not too old, not too mean, not too extreme, not too out of touch—that he is, in Buckley's formulation, Gary Cooper to Clinton's Duddy Kravitz, a quietly decent fellow who would make a quietly decent President. Dole aspires to be the minimally acceptable man. It could happen, but seeing Dole in action for several days during Week One of the new strategy made you wonder if minimalism is all it's cracked up to be.

WATCHING Bob Dole campaign for the Presidency is a curious and dislocating experience, like showering clothed or eating naked. It isn't unpleasant, but you can't escape the sense that the thing is at odds with itself. Dole is not simply an unattractive candidate, like Michael Dukakis, or an exhausted one, like George Bush. He is something more interesting and more problematic. He is a sort of nega-candidate—someone whose essential being runs counter to the whole hideous business of what a candidate must do, day after day, to get elected. Campaigning on a national scale is largely about pretending—pretending that you are really interested in the stump speech you must give three or four or five times a day, that you really care about each and every one of the several hundred people you will meet in the course of that day, that you are really appalled at the perfidy of your opponent, really deeply concerned about the issues your staff dreams up for you to be deeply concerned about, really pleased to spend your days and nights abasing yourself before voters who can't be bothered to put on long pants to attend your speech, reporters whose driving desire is to trick you into making a fool of yourself, contributors who regard you with the scarcely veiled contempt of the bribe-giver for the bribe-taker. Great political performers, such as Bill Clinton, are great because, on some level, they aren't pretending. They actually like all this—or, at least, they like it enough (or need it enough) so that



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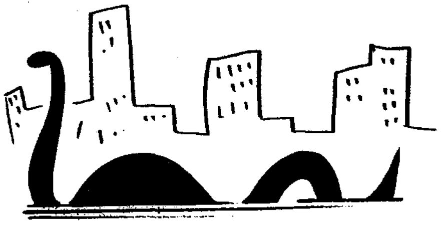
they can do it for a hundred and twenty days in a row without losing their minds. Dole hates it so much that he can hardly bring himself to go through the motions, and even then he cannot resist uttering subversive remarks, in a kind of sidelong running commentary, that make it clear that he's aware of the sham of what he is doing. He campaigns as if he were a man literally beside himself. There is the candidate, looking as he should, in a dark-blue suit and a crisp white shirt (the dress-down-Friday look adopted by Citizen Dole after his resignation from the Senate has made only fitful appearances), and saying, more or less, the sorts of things he should. And there is the candidate also, standing at his own shoulder, observing his own performance with a cold and knowing eye, and muttering wise-guy putdowns out of the corner of his mouth.

Dole's refusal to properly pretend—his insistence on subverting his own campaigning—runs so deep in the bone that it cannot be eradicated, and so close to the surface that it cannot be hidden. How deep, how close? Recently, the candidate's brain trust came up with a campaign slogan designed to highlight its core idea that Dole is a good enough man to serve as the nation's leader, and that Clinton is not. The slogan is "Bob Dole: A Better Man for a Better America." It is a decent enough slogan, and a normal candidate would have woven it into the flow of his daily verbiage in a dozen different ways. In several days of listening to Dole speak in the Midwest, I heard him mention it only once, and that was in an interview, and this is how he described it: " 'A Better Plan, A Man for a Better America'—whatever that slogan is they're working on." What you have in Bob Dole is a politician whose refusal to pretend that he gives a damn about the business of marketing himself is so profound that he can't bring himself to memorize his own bumper sticker.

On Thursday of Week One of the new strategy, Dole appeared at an event in Dearborn, Michigan, at a history theme park called the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, a fake hamlet made of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings, separated from modernity by a brick wall and devoted mostly to the works of Edison and Ford. The place, with Model Ts sprinkled among old buildings transplanted from Menlo Park, in a vaguely pastoral setting traversed by an old choo-choo train and a steamboat, had a weird, generic feel to it, and the event did, too. It was as if it had been put together by the Campaigns Division of Time Warner: Edison, Ford, Appalachian folk music, Dole—all part of the wonderful world of yesteryear.

In front of one of the Edison buildings, about two hundred people were sitting on wooden benches and folding chairs in a loose circle on the grass, looking uncomfortable in the damp-cotton air of a hot and humid afternoon. The people were meant to be props; this was to be the sort of event that Clinton so favors—a "town meeting," in which the candidate discusses real concerns with real people. Every politician in America knows the trick in these things. The candidate always begins by declaring that he is happy to get out of Washington (or Albany, or Columbus, or Sacramento), and that he isn't going to be making any speeches today, because, Lord knows, politicians talk too much anyway, and he just wants to listen to what the people here—the real experts—have to say. Then the seven or eight people who have been chosen by the campaign ask their prepared questions, and the candidate answers them in seven or eight mini-speeches that demonstrate the breadth of his knowledge and the brilliance of his solution to the problem at hand. Every politician in America knows the trick, it turns out, except Bob Dole.

Dole took his seat in a wooden chair at the center of the circle. He smiled politely as a bright-faced man named Steven K. Hamp, who is the president of the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, welcomed him to a "public discussion of new ideas and issues in education," and informed him that "we are all entering an era where we are all stakeholders in the goal of educating our youth," and assured him that today's discussion would be taking place in "a context-rich environment." John Engler, the Republican governor of Michigan, and one of Dole's shortlist candidates for running mate, who was serving as stage manager and m.c., introduced the first real-person speaker, a woman named Valerie Becker, who told Dole to "keep up the good work." When she had finished, Engler looked at Dole. Dole smiled. Engler said, "Senator, I don't know if you want to comment on that, or if you'd rather wait to hear from Larry Patrick next?"



Dole gave a little start in his chair. "I'd rather listen to what you all have to say," he said. "Politicians can speak forever." That, of course, was the usual thing to say at this juncture, but it became clear during the next hour that Dole actually meant what he said. He had no desire to speak. He did speak a little, now and then, but he never showed the slightest interest in performing properly. Every so often, Engler would try to get Dole into the swim, but it was not to much avail. Finally, at one of Engler's more pointed entreaties, Dole retreated altogether, back to where he had left his heart. "At one time, I was in the Congress of the United States. I'm no longer there, but we used to yield back our time," Dole said. "I'd like to yield back my time here to others who haven't participated." That did Engler in; you could almost see the fight go out of him.

That evening, Dole was scheduled to attend the Max M. Fisher National Republican Leadership Award Dinner at Cobo Hall, in downtown Detroit. Fund-raising dinners are the most painful of shams for a candidate. They are presented as if the candidate were the guest of honor, but, of course, he is not. He is the entertainment. The guests of honor are the people with the money. The candidate serves the same function as the filet mignon: to make the people with the money feel that they are getting their money's worth. This particular dinner honored Fisher, a great moneyman of Republican politics, and Richard M. DeVos, a founder of Amway and another major Republican player. It was one of the big dinners of the season—a hundred and eighty-three tables for ten, a thousand dollars a plate, three million dollars raked in. It was held in a room formed by walls of blue-and-white cloth drapes sectioning off part of a vast concrete space. It lasted for nearly three hours, and it was, even by the standards of such events, perfect in the totality of its joylessness.

The Reverend Stanley Mast, of the LaGrave Avenue Christian Reform Church, offered an invocation that should become the official fund-raising prayer of both parties. "O God, as we gather together tonight to honor important people in our country, we pause to acknowledge that you are master of the universe and Lord of the nations," the Reverend prayed. "As we focus on finances and politics, we give you thanks for the gift of wealth, we thank you for the privilege of living in America, this great land of freedom, a land that not only allows but even encourages the individual pursuit of wealth. We thank you, O God, for the success so many of us have had in that pursuit. . . . Bless our guests of honor. May their generosity and faith inspire us all. Bless these upcoming elections. May the right people be elected. And God bless America. Amen."

The master of ceremonies, Peter F. Secchia, who is a former American Ambassador to Italy, made a number of bad and tasteless jokes about the Clintons. George Bush appeared momentarily by videotape from somebody's living room, looking very tired. Governor Engler, still doing yeoman's duty, said that the polls were wrong. Dole spoke briefly, baldly, badly, stringing one platitude disjointedly after another. "We have a challenge," he said. "But every challenge is also an opportunity. If we join together and if we will understand the importance—not of Bob Dole or Bill Clinton but of America, and our future and the direction we want to go—then on November 5, 1996, we will elect a new President of the United States." After two and a half hours, Secchia said, "Ladies and gentlemen, we are adjourned." The room was half empty within ten minutes, the men and women who had paid a thousand dollars each for the evening rushing out through the exits as the band played, incongruously, Sister Sledge's 1979 hit "We Are Family."

IT is all horrible—the faked enthusiasm of the advance kids trying to juice up the paltry crowds, the town meetings that are neither meetings nor take place in towns, the grubbing for dollars in basement ballrooms—and everyone in politics knows it. God knows Dole knows. When I spoke with him four days after the Max Fisher dinner, his suffering hung like a mist over his rambling semi-monologue answer to the questions of the day. "I spent a lot of time in the past month, raised a lot of money—I don't know, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen million dollars. And that's what I had to do. I had to raise it, had to do nineteen or twenty or so fund-raisers. Even to keep the generic ads on the air, I have to be out there raising money. . . . I know we've been taking a lot of heat for not having some big announcement every week. And then I look at Clinton, who's saying this stuff about curfews and truancy and school uniforms—it's nothing the federal government is going to do, but he gets coverage, even for those little things. . . . Look, I know Buchanan well; I don't dislike him, but I'm the nominee, and if he wants to win, wants to beat Clinton, why isn't he helping me? What is the big hangup?"

Listening to Dole as he groused his way from one thing that was bugging him to the next, never more than a slip away from saying something that would get him in trouble again, always ready to admit that things were lousy and might very well get worse, I knew that there was nothing his handlers could ever do to fix this. Dole is the nega-candidate, and that is all there is to it. He's never going to be able to sustain any sort of movie version of himself, never going to be able to remember to pretend for more than a few minutes at a time. If his handlers insist on stripping his subversive qualities from his public performance, there won't be anything there at all.

The funny thing is, though, that if Dole has a chance—and he does—his self-subversion is the only reason. After four years of the President as bond salesman, there is something sneakily, cumulatively refreshing about a man who can't be bothered to keep up the pretense that he really cares whether you like him or what his position on abortion is supposed to be or what Steven K. Hamp, the president of the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, thinks about federal education policy. But it's a perverse way to get to be President. ◆

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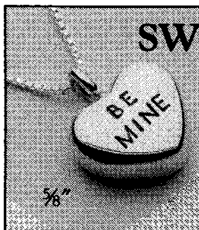

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE CRASH DETECTIVES

The experts trying to solve the T.W.A. disaster are haunted by the mystery of USAir Flight 427. That plane crashed outside Pittsburgh in 1994, killing everyone on board, and leaving the investigators to determine how an aircraft could just suddenly drop out of the clear sky.

BY JONATHAN HARR

I—THE FLIGHT

On the evening of Wednesday, September 7, 1994, a Boeing 737 jetliner owned by USAir arrived at Bradley International Airport, just outside Hartford, Connecticut, on a regularly scheduled flight. Before its departure early the next morning, for Syracuse, it underwent a transit check—a routine maintenance inspection that occurs every seven days or thirty-five flight hours, whichever comes first, on all commercial 737 jetliners in the United States.

This particular plane, a 737-300 registered as N513AU, was one of two hundred and thirty 737s operated by USAir. Boeing had manufactured it in October, 1987, and USAir had then bought it for approximately thirty million dollars. During the previous seven years, it had logged nearly twenty-four thousand hours of flight time and more than fourteen thousand cycles, the term the industry applies to each takeoff and landing. As commercial airliners go, it was a relatively young plane. With regular maintenance, it could be expected to provide decades of service.

To all appearances, it was also in good health. The transit check, which consisted largely of a visual inspection of the aircraft and its fluid levels, revealed nothing untoward. Mechanics had previously noticed several small defects—a dent in the left aft inboard flap assembly, worn duct sliders on both the right and the left engine's thrust reversers, and a worn mount bushing on one thrust reverser—but the wear on these parts was considered within normal limits, and repair of them had been deferred until the plane's next stopover at a maintenance center. The maintenance log had also noted "soft and spongy" flooring in the aisle next to Row 5. This, too, had been deferred, but USAir's mechanics did perform a temporary repair by inserting a sheet of aluminum under the carpeting.

On Thursday, September 8th, the last day of its existence, N513AU departed from Hartford at 6:20 A.M. for the short flight to Syracuse. From there, it went to Rochester, then on to Charlotte, North Carolina. By noon, it was in Jacksonville, Florida. Boeing had designed the 737, known variously in the airline community as the Guppy and as Fat Albert, for precisely these kinds of short and intermediate flights. It has proved to be a spectacularly successful design. Since the plane's first commercial flight, in 1968, Boeing has sold more than twenty-six hundred 737s worldwide—more than any other commercial jet transport ever built. The plane has a reputation for durability, reliability, and safety. Every hour, some five hundred 737s take off or land somewhere in the world. Nevertheless, like any highly sophisticated technological machine, it has not been without problems. Over almost three decades, sixty-seven have crashed, mostly in Third World countries; twenty-two have crashed since 1990. But no single problem, in and of itself, had emerged as a critical safety issue.

In Jacksonville, N513AU had a change of flight crew. At 12:15 P.M., Captain Peter Germano and his first officer, Charles Emmett III, arrived at the airport with three flight attendants and boarded the plane. Shortly before one o'clock, another USAir pilot, William Jackson, also got on board. Captain Jackson was not on duty during this flight. He was deadheading, as such a ride is called, to Chicago, where he was scheduled to go on duty the following day. Upon boarding, he stopped at the cockpit door and introduced himself to Germano and Emmett. Then, since the plane was not fully booked, he took a seat in the passenger cabin.

The seventy-minute flight back to Charlotte was uneventful. On the next leg, to Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, paying customers occupied all the cabin seats, so Captain Jackson moved up into the cockpit, to the jump seat, a small, stiff, straight-backed chair situated behind the pilots' center console. During the flight, he chatted with Germano and Emmett, whom he later described as "very capable and very professional." He learned that they and the three flight attendants were on their final day of a three-day tour of duty that had taken them to half a dozen cities across the Eastern United States and Canada. Germano, who was forty-five, and lived in Moorestown, New Jersey, with his wife and two young children, had been flying for USAir since 1981. Emmett, thirty-eight, a tall, good-looking Texan who'd been married for less than two years, had flown commercial flights since 1987. Between them, Germano and Emmett had more than twenty-one thousand hours of flying experience, nearly eight thousand on 737s.

Midway through the flight to Chicago, after the plane attained cruising altitude, one of the flight attendants called Captain Germano on the intercom. A passenger in Row 1 had alerted her to an odd noise emanating from the ceiling of the cabin. It sounded, the passenger later said, like "water gurgling . . . from a sink into a drain." The flight attendant told Germano that she thought a noise was coming from the public-address system. Germano turned to Jackson, seated in the cramped jump seat, and asked if he had inadvertently keyed the public-address microphone, which hung from the rear of the center console. Jackson had crossed

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his legs, and his knee had indeed brushed against the microphone. He moved his leg, and later reported that he'd heard no further complaint about unusual noises during the flight.

At O'Hare, Jackson said goodbye to his fellow-pilots and deplaned with the rest of the passengers. Germano and Emmett and the flight attendants were scheduled to depart in less than an hour, at 5:50 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, for a fifty-five-minute flight to Pittsburgh, their final destination on this tour of duty.

Downstairs in the USAir maintenance office, Gerald Fox, a maintenance foreman, was about to leave for home when the phone rang. A woman on the other end told Fox that she was the wife of a passenger about to fly to Pittsburgh. She'd overheard some passengers who had just got off the plane talking about strange noises they'd heard during the flight, and she was concerned for her husband's safety. Fox assured the woman that there were two USAir mechanics on duty who would take care of any problems before the plane departed for Pittsburgh.

After hanging up, Fox walked out to the jetway, where he encountered Captain Germano. He asked Germano about the status of the plane, and, as Fox later recalled, Germano replied that "there were no problems and everything was fine." Satisfied with this, Fox left for home.

Now designated as Flight 427 to Pittsburgh, N513AU left the gate shortly after six o'clock E.D.T. with all but two seats occupied: a hundred and twenty-seven passengers were aboard, many of them business commuters, one a small child seated on his mother's lap. Charles Emmett flew the plane on this leg of the trip while Germano handled the radio transmissions. It was an exceptionally fine day for flying. From Chicago to Pittsburgh, the sky was clear and virtually cloudless, with only light winds.

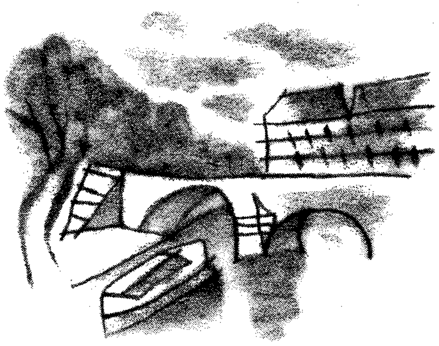
Most of what is known about this flight comes from the flight-data recorder, which registers basic parameters such as airspeed, heading, and degree of pitch and roll, and from the cockpit voice recorder, a continuous loop of tape that records the pilots' conversation and other cockpit sounds for thirty minutes and endlessly recycles itself. The voice recorder seemed to reflect an alert, capable, and congenial crew. Flying at cruise altitude on autopilot, Germano and Emmett did not have much to do aside from monitoring radio transmissions from air-traffic control. As they began their initial approach to Pittsburgh, they heard air-traffic control directing a Delta flight, a Boeing 727, some four and a half miles ahead of them, on the same flight path they would soon follow. About seventeen minutes out of Pittsburgh, one of the flight attendants, a young woman of twenty-eight named Sarah Slocum-Hamley, opened the cockpit door and asked the pilots if they wanted anything to drink. She offered to make them her "special fruity juice cocktail," and both men accepted. "That is good," Emmett said a few minutes later. "Be real good with some dark rum in it."

Just about that time, Pittsburgh control instructed Flight 427 to descend to six thousand feet and throttle back to two hundred and ten knots. Emmett acknowledged the instructions. A minute later, he and Germano heard air-traffic control also instruct the Delta 727 to descend to six thousand feet. They began going through their checklist in preparation for landing.

Then Emmett took the public-address microphone and said, in his Texas drawl, "Folks, from the flight deck, we should be on the ground in about ten more minutes. . . . Certainly 'preciate you choosing USAir for your travel needs this evening. Hope you enjoyed the flight, hope you come back and travel with us again." He asked the passengers to check their seat belts and told the flight attendants to prepare for arrival.

Air-traffic control instructed the Delta flight to turn left onto a heading of one zero zero. "Boy, they always slow you up so bad here," Germano said. A minute and thirty-eight seconds later, the tower gave the same instructions to Germano and Emmett.

"That sun is gonna be just like it was taking off in Cleveland yesterday, too," Emmett said. "I'm just gonna close my eyes." He laughed. "You holler when it looks like we're close." He laughed again.



Air-traffic control advised Flight 427 to be on the lookout for a northbound Jetstream, climbing up from three thousand three hundred to five thousand feet.

"We're looking for traffic," Germano replied.

Twenty seconds later, Emmett said, in a mock foreign accent, "Oh, ya, I see zuh Jetstream."

At the instant Emmett began to articulate the word "Jetstream," the cockpit voice recorder later revealed the sound of a muted thump. Two seconds after that, there came a sound similar to three electrical clicks. Germano muttered, "Sheez," and Emmett grunted.

There was another sound—a shuddering triple thump—followed half a second later by a rapid "clickety-click." On the cockpit voice recorder, Germano can be heard inhaling and exhaling quickly, as if in surprise. Yet another thump, and the plane began a deep roll to the left.

"Whoa!" exclaimed Germano.

More clickety-clicks and the sound of the engine growing louder. "Hang on!" Germano cried to Emmett. "Hang on!"

Emmett, presumably wrestling with the steering column, can be heard grunting. The wailing horn of the autopilot disconnect began to sound.

"Hang on!" Germano said again.

Emmett swore.

For nearly three seconds, neither pilot said a word, but Emmett's breathing, from exertion or alarm or both, is clearly audible on the cockpit voice recorder.

Then Germano exclaimed, "What the hell is this?"

The cockpit became a symphony of alarms. The stick shaker—a menacing sound like the rattling of a large gourd filled with stones—went off, alerting the pilots that the plane had lost lift and was about to enter a stall. It was accompanied by a buffeting sound characteristic of a stall, by the musical tone of an altitude alert, and by a robotic warning voice repeatedly crying, "Traffic! Traffic!"

"Oh, God! Oh, God!" said Germano.

The air-traffic controller in Pittsburgh, unaware of Flight 427's plight, saw on his radar screen only that the plane had descended from its assigned altitude. He radioed the pilot to maintain six thousand feet.

Germano responded by yelling to air-traffic control, "427 emergency!"

"Shit," said Emmett.

"Pull!" shouted Germano.

"Ohh, shit!" cried Emmett.

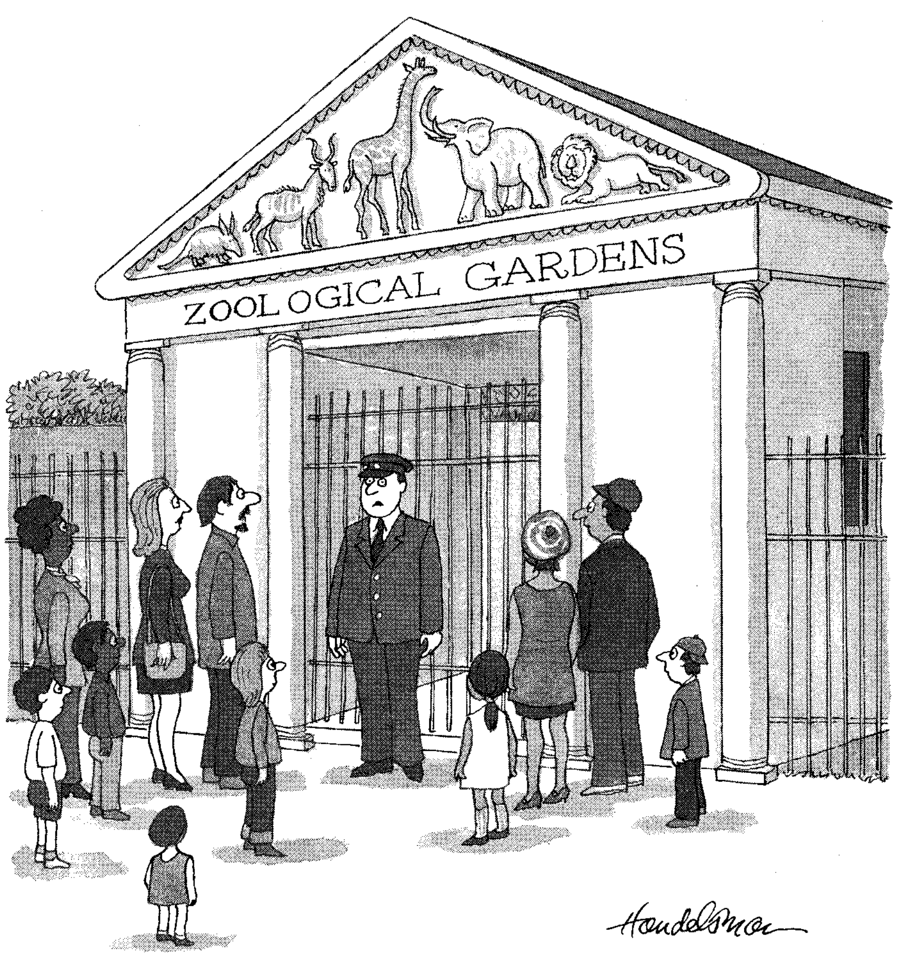
"Pull!" shouted Germano again.

"God!" said Emmett.

Germano began a scream that would last the final one and a half seconds of the cockpit voice tape. In the fraction of a second before Flight 427, nearly vertical, hit the ground at a speed of three hundred and one miles an hour, Emmett uttered the word "No."

Six miles away, at the Pittsburgh airport, air-traffic controller Richard Fuga stared in disbelief at his radar screen, on which Flight 427's altitude readout was depicted as "XXX." His voice rising in urgency, Fuga called repeatedly to 427 but got no response.

Kenneth Erb, the air-traffic-control area manager, was just returning from a break when a traffic assistant rushed up to him and said, "We have a bad emergency." Erb went quickly to Richard Fuga's station. Within seconds, he had halted all arrivals and departures and instructed every controller to try to raise Flight 427 on all available frequencies. He called the tower cab and asked its occupants to scan the northwest sector for any sight of 427. The tower reported a dense column of black smoke rising near the town of Aliquippa, in Hopewell Township. Erb's first thought, later expressed to investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board, was that a bomb had gone off on board the plane. What else could have caused a 737 to fall like a stone out of the sky on a perfectly clear and serene evening?



"We had to let the animals go. No one informed them of their rights when they were arrested."

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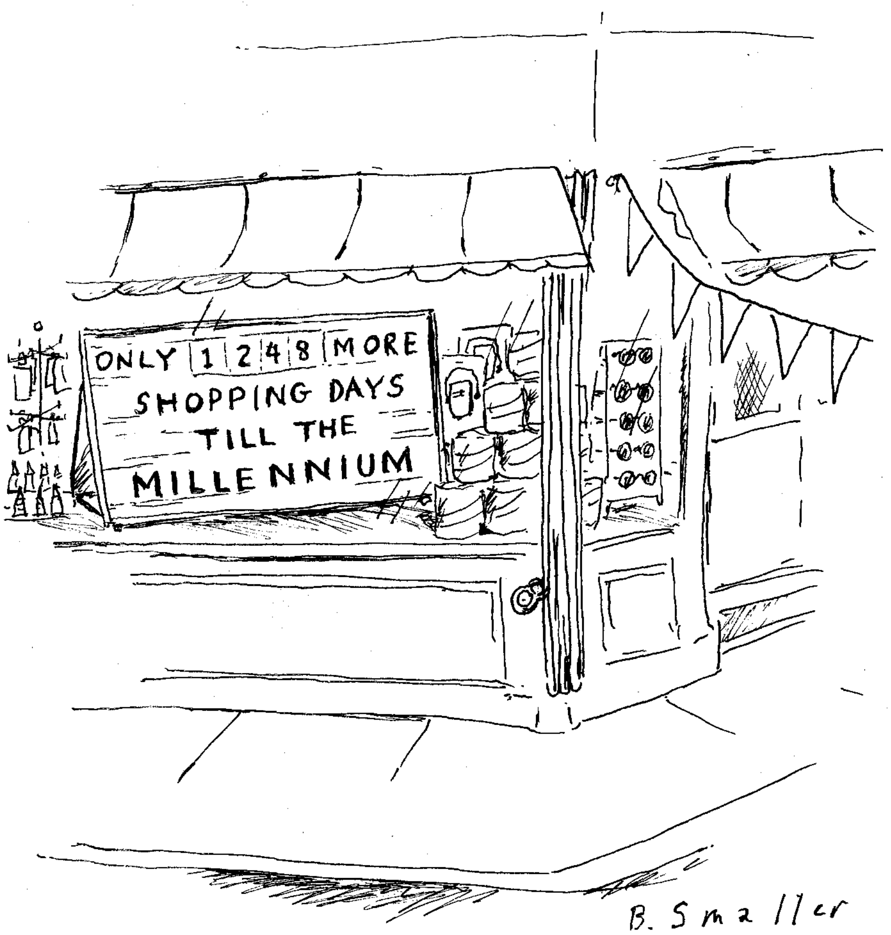
II—WHERE'S THE PLANE?

Thomas Haueter, a senior investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board, has two phone lines to his home in Great Falls, Virginia. On that Thursday evening, some seventeen minutes after Flight 427 went down, one phone rang, and as he reached to pick it up the other rang. The first caller, from the Federal Aviation Administration's regional communications center, told Haueter of a report that a USAir Boeing 737 had crashed near Pittsburgh. In the calls that followed in quick succession, Haueter learned that a skydiving aircraft in the vicinity had confirmed the accident, that the plane had gone down in a hilly, densely wooded area, and that local rescue teams were already on the scene.

So, of course, was the news media. Within forty minutes of the crash, several Pittsburgh television stations had camera crews at the Green Garden Plaza shopping center, in Hopewell Township, near the site of the disaster, and CNN was soon broadcasting pictures of the scene.

Commercial-airline disasters exert a unique fascination on the human mind, perhaps because they often involve large numbers of fatalities but also because flying, although statistically one of the safest means of modern transport, remains for many people a fundamentally unnatural act. The airline industry, a multibillion-dollar sector of the economy, depends foremost on the travelling public's perception that it is safe. The National Transportation Safety Board is charged with investigating a wide range of commercial-transport accidents, but it is most visible when it deals with airline disasters. It has a small staff—three hundred and fifty employees—and a thirty-eight-million-dollar budget, minuscule by Washington standards. In its twenty-nine-year history, it has investigated three hundred and seventy-four major commercial-airline accidents (not counting the current T.W.A. Flight 800 investigation) and has found what it deems the "probable cause" in all but four. Three of those four happened more than twenty-five years ago—ancient history in the aeronautical industry. Before Flight 427, the most recent and most troubling had concerned another Boeing 737, owned by United Airlines, which went down on March 3, 1991, killing everyone on board as it approached Colorado Springs. That investigation had dragged on for twenty-one months, then the longest and most costly ever undertaken by the Safety Board, and had closed without yielding any answer.

Haueter had not worked on that accident. He recalls that it came briefly to mind on the night he learned about Flight 427, for both planes were 737s and both had crashed on approach. But each accident is unique, the result of countless variables,


ONLY 1 2 4 8 MORE SHOPPING DAYS TILL THE MILLENNIUM
B. Smaller

and Haueter consciously strove to avoid making any assumptions. "That's one area that always causes trouble," he likes to say. In the months that followed, however, many people involved in the Flight 427 investigation, Haueter among them, began to see disturbing parallels between the two accidents.

Haueter was forty-two, an aeronautical engineer with a graduate degree in management from George Mason University. He'd started flying, like his father and his grandfather before him, when he was fifteen. He had come to the Safety Board eleven years earlier as an analyst, evaluating responses to Safety Board recommendations, and had risen quickly through the ranks to become one of six investigators in charge—I.I.C.s, as they are called. The I.I.C.s, along with a staff of specialists in a dozen disciplines, including power plants, aircraft structure, systems, operations, maintenance, meteorology, and human performance, all take turns in a weekly rotation on what is known as the Go-Team. The team members, who are based both in Washington and at regional field offices, are on call twenty-four hours a day. Most rotations pass uneventfully, with maybe one or two minor calls—an airliner mishap with no fatalities, or perhaps the crash of a privately owned Cessna—that don't warrant a full Go-Team dispatch. Haueter had known I.I.C.s who'd spent weeks, even months, at a time on rotation, hoping for a "major."

As it happened, Haueter hadn't been scheduled for the Go-Team rotation the week of Flight 427. He had traded places with another I.I.C., who had requested the trade because his wedding anniversary fell during that week. When, on the day after the crash, that I.I.C. offered to take over the investigation, Haueter told him, "It's mine." He said later, "This was one I was waiting to have happen."

One of Haueter's closest friends at the Safety Board is Gregory Phillips, a specialist in flight-control systems and hydraulics. Although Haueter is nominally Phillips's superior in the chain of command, they regard each other as equals. They are about the same age, they both come from the Midwest (Haueter from Ohio, Phillips from Indiana), and they have worked together on many investigations—in Norway, in India, in Suriname, and, most recently, on the crash of another Boeing 737 into the Panamanian jungle. Unlike Haueter, Phillips had worked on the Colorado Springs crash, and the failure to solve that one still ate at him. He had taken to monitoring every incident report, no matter how minor, that concerned flight-control anomalies on 737s. On the evening of the Flight 427 crash, he was at home with his family, in Waldorf, Maryland. His youngest son, who was twelve, was watching television, and exclaimed, "Dad! There's been a crash!" Phillips turned to CNN and watched for a few minutes. Colorado Springs did not leap immediately to his mind. His first thought was: Did it hit another plane? It had been in the vicinity of the airport, ready to land. He was on the Go-Team rotation that week, but even if he hadn't been he would have helped with the investigation. He had with him at home diagrams of the 737 and schematics of the hydraulic and flight-control systems. Before even making a phone call, he pulled a suitcase out of the closet and began to pack.

Planning for the logistics of the investigation went on throughout the evening and into the early hours of Friday. Haueter and his superior at the Safety Board, Ronald Schleede, were forced to delay the Go-Team's departure for Pittsburgh until just before dawn, until pilots for an F.A.A. plane became available. But it hardly mattered. Police and emergency crews in Hopewell Township had secured the perimeter of the crash site, and Haueter reasoned that in the darkness, in the middle of a forest, there was little that the Go-Team could hope to accomplish. Haueter wanted two Safety Board specialists in each investigative group. He felt he'd need them to keep control of the investigation, which would also include teams of experts from Boeing, the engine manufacturer, USAir, the airline pilots' union, and the F.A.A., among others. Simply finding a large conference room near the airport on short notice—one that could serve as Haueter's command post and accommodate a hundred or more investigators for daily progress meetings—was proving difficult. The news media were swarming into Beaver County, and hotel rooms were in short supply, too. By two o'clock, when Haueter lay down to get an hour or so of fitful sleep, he still did not know whether anyone on board Flight 427 had survived.

Greg Phillips did not sleep at all. He went out to get some cash from an A.T.M. and to buy half a dozen extra rolls of film. Then he lay restlessly in bed, thinking about how to organize the investigation. At three o'clock, he got up, had breakfast, and left for Washington National Airport. On his first major accident investigation—the 1988 crash of a Delta 727 on takeoff from Dallas–Fort Worth International Airport—he had been apprehensive about how he'd react to the sight of burned and mangled bodies. By the time he arrived, however, the bodies had been removed. On his next major—in 1989, of a DC-10 that had lost its hydraulics during flight and crashed in Sioux City, Iowa—he heard that the bodies were still strewn among the wreckage. In his Sioux City hotel room, the expectation of confronting death made him unable to sleep. He went out to the site early the next morning, and walked among the wreckage and the corpses. He did not feel, to his surprise, greatly distressed until he came upon the backpack of a small child, at a slight remove from the main body of the wreck. His knees went weak. He felt, he said later, as if someone had hit him in the head. His own children carried similar backpacks when they flew to Phillips's home town, in Indiana, every winter. He made it a point to find out what had happened to the child who'd owned the backpack. Of the two hundred and ninety-six people on the plane, a hundred and eleven had died. The child, Phillips learned later, was a boy and had survived.

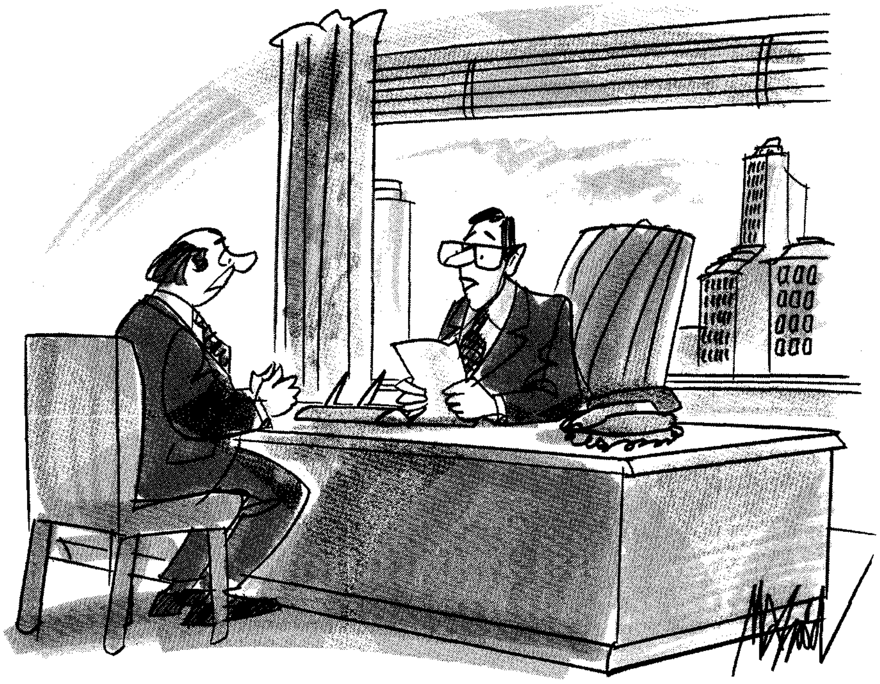
THE investigators convened before five-thirty on Friday morning at National Airport, where an F.A.A. Gulfstream waited to fly them to Pittsburgh. By now, Haueter knew that there were no survivors. Rumor had it that there were not even any intact bodies. Once airborne, Haueter sought out Carl Vogt, one of five Presidential appointees who headed the Safety Board. Vogt had served a two-year term as the board's chairman, but he had never witnessed an investigation of this magnitude. "It's going to be absolute chaos," Haueter told him. "Give me time. Don't think I'm screwing up for the first four or five hours."

It was dawn and was raining lightly when the Gulfstream landed in Pittsburgh. At the airport, the investigators were met by regional F.A.A. employees, who had gone to the crash site the night before and retrieved the flight-data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder. The boxes—both dented, one of them breached by impact—were put aboard the Gulfstream for immediate delivery to the Safety Board's labs in Washington. Haueter had no idea how sophisticated 427's flight-data recorder was, but he knew that it wouldn't have a hundred or more parameters, as many 737s flying in European fleets did. "I knew I'd be lucky if it had thirty parameters," he recalled thinking. "It was possible it'd have only five"—like Colorado Springs—"and we've all seen enough flight-data recorders that didn't work."

The investigators drove in a caravan of rented cars to Hopewell Township. As they neared the Green Garden Plaza, a small shopping area nestled at the foot of a wooded hill, they saw in the early-morning light a great throng of people. The night before, more than forty fire departments had responded to the crash. Now jamming the plaza were police and fire vehicles, ambulances, television vans with satellite dishes, and the official cars of the Beaver County Coroner's office and of the township, county, state, highway, and airport authorities. Teams of clergy and mental-health and social workers had established a triage site to counsel bereaved family members, and also distraught witnesses and rescue personnel. The Salvation Army had set up a relief station to dispense food, drink, and blankets. Amid this crowd, more than a hundred members of the press clamored for scraps of information. Their numbers would grow as the day wore on, and the confusion would increase as the governor, the lieutenant governor, the Secretary of Transportation, and Dan Rather made their appearances.

As the investigator in charge, Haueter had the ultimate authority, by law, over all aspects of the crash investigation. He and his team were greeted by police and rescue officials, who led them through the crowd to a temporary command post in the showroom of an automobile dealership. The crash site, Haueter learned, was half a mile away, just over the crest of the hill. A crude dirt road ran nearby.

The Safety Board team, in the company of emergency-response personnel, made the trip up the hill in four-wheel-drive vehicles. The intermittent morning rain had let up for the moment, and an ethereal mist draped the hills. The vehicles stopped at the edge of a pine grove. Investigators say that aircraft accidents all have the same distinctive smell, and that once experienced it is never forgotten. When Haueter stepped out of the vehicle, he could smell the reek of this accident—the jet fuel, the smoldering remains of the plane, the scent of roasted flesh—even



"It's bad news, I'm afraid. Now she's asking twenty-three million dollars and wants you to address her as 'Your Royal Highness.'"

TONY TYE/PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

The wreckage of Flight 427 in a USAir hangar at the Pittsburgh airport. Thomas Haueter, the investigator in charge,

ever seen such carnage at a crash site.

though he could not yet see it. Up here, near the site of the accident, there were no crowds. The investigators began walking as a group among the pines, but within a few moments each proceeded as if alone. They saw hanging in the branches of the trees debris of every sort—charred pieces of paper, scraps of aluminum, shreds of cloth and plastic, and bits of insulation, wiring, and human flesh. Drawing closer to the site of impact, Haueter came upon a femur stripped clean of muscle and sinew. All around him, amid the fragments of the aircraft, remnants of bone, flesh, and viscera lay on the forest floor. Mostly, they were unrecognizable as parts of human bodies. In more than two dozen major investigations, Haueter had never seen such carnage. It posed a clear biohazard, and that in itself posed a minor impediment to the investigation. Everyone who came onto the site thereafter, Haueter decided, would have to wear a full bodysuit and mask as a safeguard against infectious diseases.

The investigators came out of the forest and stood on the edge of an embankment that sloped steeply down to a dirt road. Below them, in a great gouge of earth on the opposite embankment, was the impact site of Flight 427.

The majority of all aircraft accidents are "hit and skips." Wings may shear off, fuselages may break apart, yet the wreckage is identifiable as an airplane even to a layperson. But the fragments of Flight 427, still smoking from fire, bore no resemblance to a craft of any sort. There was, one investigator later observed, scarcely a piece larger than a car door. Looking down the embankment, Cynthia Keegan, a specialist in aircraft structures, who was responsible for documenting every fragment of the wreckage and determining the structural integrity of the plane at the time of the accident, said to herself, "My God, where's the plane?"

The investigators made their way cautiously down the soft earth of the embankment. Amid the wreckage, they began identifying parts of the plane—the shock strut of a landing gear, a wing spar, the smoldering hulk of an engine. The largest identifiable portion of the plane, although severely damaged by impact forces and fire, was the empennage—the tail section, consisting of the rudder and the vertical and horizontal stabilizers. Clearly the plane had hit nose first, the cockpit and fuselage disintegrating as they absorbed the great impact of the crash. The team found what little remained of the cockpit. "You look for the largest group of wires," Greg Phillips said. "A bird's nest of wires."

The recovery of body parts from the wreckage, the first task of the coroner's team, concerned Phillips. The job would obviously require a large number of emergency-rescue personnel, and Phillips did not want anyone muscling around pieces of the plane just yet. "I figured body-part removal could impact the wreckage. I didn't want it disrupted. . . . If we can figure out what happened in the first hour, then we know what area has the highest probability of paying off."

Some months later, Haueter recalled his thoughts as he surveyed the scene around him: "Even if you know what caused a crash, the investigation goes forward—you still have to fill in each box—but it's focussed. But I knew that even if this was a simple accident it was going to be difficult, given the degree of destruction. Even if the flight-data recorder and the voice recorder told us exactly what had happened, it was going to be difficult. This was not going to be four days on the scene and we all go home. This was going to be weeks."

On their first trip in, the Safety Board investigators did not linger long at the crash site. Haueter had scheduled an organizational meeting at ten o'clock with all the parties to the investigation, for by then teams of crash experts from Boeing and the other parties would have arrived. The Safety Board had not been able to find a room large enough for this first meeting. USAir, which has a large facility in Pittsburgh, offered one of its executive conference rooms. With reluctance, Haueter accepted. He did not like using the facilities of a party to the crash, but for the moment he had little choice.

The appearance of an independent, objective inquiry into the cause of an accident is crucial to the Safety Board's credibility. Yet the Board does not have the manpower or the expertise to conduct a major investigation on its own. It relies on what it refers to as "the party system," calling upon experts from the interested parties to assist in the investigation, on the premise, for example, that no one knows the working innards of a General Electric jet engine better than the General Electric engineers who designed and built that engine. These experts are assigned to Safety Board groups—in this case, Boeing structural engineers to the structures group, USAir maintenance personnel to the maintenance group, members of the pilots' union to the human-performance and other groups—and each group, of anywhere from five to ten or more members, is chaired by a Safety Board specialist. Given the money, the reputations, and the potential exposure to liability that are at stake in determining the cause of a crash, the conflicts of interest in such a system seem clear and incurable. Haueter recalls his own astonishment when, newly arrived at the Safety Board, he learned about the system: "I said, 'You've got to be kidding. That can't possibly work.' But I found out that it did work. There are problems, of course, and some very heated debates at times. People would like to drive the investigation in their own interest. It's up to me to control that."

Haueter's primary instrument of control lay in his authority to dismiss any fractious party member from the investigation. He made this authority known when he called to order the organizational meeting in USAir's conference room. Two hundred people had crowded into the large room, some of them sitting on the floor, others spilling out through the doors. A number of them, predictably, were USAir executives.

Standing before them, Haueter began to lay out the rules of the investigation. Haueter is six feet tall and has regular features that many would call handsome. He has a full head of reddish-blond hair and eyes as blue as any movie star's, and he is trim, although not especially athletic. He left the Midwest long ago, but he still retains the polite, agreeable social manner often attributed to Midwesterners. Beneath that manner, he has an uncommonly sweet nature. In the largely male world of the aeronautical community, this trait is not always held in especially high regard. But Haueter got things done, by consensus, polite persistence, and engineering probity. Lacking charisma, he also seemed to lack guile, and this, in turn, inspired trust and loyalty among those who worked with him.

The organizational meeting lasted two hours, until shortly after noon. As Haueter had warned Carl Vogt, it was a chaotic affair, complicated by the sheer number of people and by whispered undercurrents of information and rumor. Haueter told the crowd that only those people he himself authorized would be permitted at the crash site and at all future meetings. He could not allow the presence of public-relations, marketing, insurance, or legal counsel for any of the parties, or anyone else who did not have an essential role in the investigation. He introduced the Safety Board group chairmen and then went around the room asking each party in turn whom they would have serve on a given group. The investigators were issued identification badges that would gain them entry to the crash site and to the daily progress meetings, to be held at Haueter's command post at six o'clock every evening.

As the organizational meeting drew to a close, the investigative groups convened among themselves and then departed on their separate missions. Some went to the crash site. Others headed off to the airport to inspect the radar record of 427's flight path, to USAir facilities to examine maintenance records, and, later, to Chicago to interview air-traffic controllers, eyewitnesses, and passengers there from the preceding flight.

Haueter went directly to a Holiday Inn near the airport, where the Safety Board had finally commandeered a large conference room. The room was being equipped with computers, fax machines, and twenty phone lines. It would serve as Haueter's command post, the place he would inhabit for eighteen hours a day in the coming week.

By late morning, the flight-data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder had arrived at the Safety Board's labs in Washington. There, an electronics engineer named James Cash labored with several colleagues for half an hour to cut open the three-eighths-inch stainless-steel jacket that encased the Fairchild voice recorder. The recorder, about the size of a shoebox, had been mounted in the aft cargo compartment. The impact of the crash had compressed the entire unit by three inches and destroyed the circuitry of the recorder. "It took a pretty good hit," Cash said. The steel memory module, which contained the four-channel tape, was also dented. The tape itself, however, appeared undamaged.

In his soundproof lab, Cash mounted the tape. Ron Schleede, the head of the Major Investigations Division, and several other Safety Board people began listening to it from the beginning. Cash had worked at the Safety Board for twelve years, and had heard nearly five hundred accident tapes. He recalls vividly his reaction to the first one—a twin-engine turboprop, a Convair, landed in a snowbank; a propeller blade came off and pierced the cabin, killing a woman—but all others since then have left him largely unaffected. He listens to their content with professional dispassion. "It doesn't bother me much anymore to listen to them," he says. "Every once in a while, you get one that's unnerving. I can tell the ones that will affect the other listeners—crew and airline people who knew the people in the crash. We've had them cry in here. Colorado Springs, there was a woman co-pilot, but the recording quality was very bad."

Cash did not find the cockpit voice recording of Flight 427 unnerving in the least. As accident tapes went, it was strictly ordinary, with one significant exception: it was perhaps the best-quality major-accident tape that Cash had ever heard. The tape itself was not brand-new, but both pilots had been wearing headsets with boom microphones. (In Cash's experience, most commercial airliners built before 1992 came equipped only with handheld mikes.) And along with the boom mikes and the cockpit-area microphone, situated in the overhead instrument panel, Cash discovered a fourth channel: the microphone in the jump-seat oxygen mask, which had been left on, no doubt inadvertently.

Listening to the tape, Cash heard a sound he did not recognize—the sound of the muted thumps that had occurred in quick succession near the moment of upset. They did not particularly stand out above the ambient noise of the cockpit, but Cash caught them on first hearing. He said to Ron Schleede, "I think they hit something."

They listened to the final thirty seconds many times. Cash thought that if Flight 427 had indeed hit something—perhaps a bird—it had struck the plane somewhere behind the nose. "If it was the cockpit or the radome, you'd hear wind noise."

Ron Schleede entertained the idea of a bomb. "It wouldn't have surprised me," he recalled some time later. "But it could also have been just a toilet seat falling down with a bang, or a flight attendant putting a bin away."

The tape contained a vast amount of information beyond what was merely audible to Cash and Schleede. A sound-spectrum analysis, for example, would later reveal whether the thumps bore the characteristic acoustical signature of an explosion. But it would take time for Cash to extract this information. Schleede had hoped for something more immediate. He'd hoped that the pilots might have actually told him what had happened, but they themselves obviously hadn't known. "An airplane like that doesn't just fall out of the sky on a clear evening," Schleede said. "It sounded a lot like Colorado Springs—unexpected. Everything's fine, and then *boom!* They're fighting the airplane, fighting to control it."

Schleede reached Haueter at two o'clock on Friday afternoon at the command post at the Holiday Inn, where the phones had just been installed. He told Haueter about the thumps and advised checking for a bird strike, most likely Canada geese—one of the few birds the plane might have encountered at six thousand feet. Beyond that, Schleede said, the cockpit voice recorder wasn't going to provide any immediate answers.

"I told you, Jared's the one who put nipples on the mannequins at Saks."

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THE bomb theory, heretofore purely speculative, gained currency when Haueter learned from the F.B.I. on Friday afternoon that one of the passengers on Flight 427 had gone to Chicago at the request of the United States Attorney's office. Initial speculation had it that this passenger, a thirty-four-year-old man named Paul Olson, was in the federal witness-protection program. This speculation proved false, but it persisted as rumor. Olson had in fact been summoned only to provide information, and perhaps to testify, in a federal drug case. His fiancée told the press that he had been nervous about testifying, but the United States Attorney's office asserted that Olson was a "minor" witness.

Up at the crash site, investigators laid out a grid dividing the site into quadrants. By early afternoon, the structures group began mapping and photographing the distribution of the wreckage within the quadrants while the coroner's deputies and some emergency-service volunteers fixed small red pennants next to each body part. In a matter of hours, hundreds of pennants, like a forest of red seedlings, covered the terrain. Everyone who entered the site was told to wear a full bodysuit and mask and, on leaving, to undergo decontamination in a solution of bleach and water. Biohazard regulations also called for the decontamination of any pieces of wreckage showing traces of blood or body tissue before they could be removed to a nearby USAir hangar.

Three decontamination stations were designed and built at the perimeter of the site with the help of Edward Kittel, a specialist from the F.A.A.'s Aviation Explosives Security Unit. Kittel's real task, however, was to examine the wreckage for signs of a bomb. (He is now working on the T.W.A. Flight 800 crash.) Even before hearing about Paul Olson, Kittel had regarded this crash as suspicious. "It didn't happen on takeoff or landing, which is when airplanes typically crash, and the weather was fine." Moreover, one eyewitness, a USAir employee, had reported seeing reddish-brown smoke coming out of the right side of the plane, forward of the wing. Kittel generally found eyewitness reports less reliable than other evidence, but this one had come from an airline employee, and the smoke—if there had indeed been smoke—might have come from the forward cargo hold, a likely area for a bomb. As a rule, a plane's tail and wings held little attraction for Kittel; cargo holds and doors, which might blow out in an explosion, interested him most. During the next week and a half, he would examine thousands of fragments of wreckage. All high explosives, from the crudest ammonium-nitrate-and-fuel-oil bomb to the most sophisticated plastics, like Semtex, detonate at rates ranging from thirty-three hundred to around twenty-five thousand feet or more per second. This force creates distinctive blast pits and craters, along with soot deposits and gas washes that leave radial streaks on nearby surfaces. Kittel's tools for finding these signs were, as he described them, "low tech": a magnifying glass, a magnet, and cotton swabs and containers for collecting residue samples.

The removal of body parts began late on Friday afternoon. Wayne Tatalovich, the county coroner, had issued a call for refrigerator trucks to carry the remains to a temporary morgue at a nearby Air Force Reserve base. Examination tables, overhead lights, and portable X-ray machines also arrived. The job of identifying those on board Flight 427 from the pieces of remains required a team of pathologists from local hospitals and odontologists from the Pennsylvania Dental Identification Team. From Mercyhurst College, in Erie, a forensic anthropologist, whose normal subjects were prehistoric human beings and their skeletal remains, volunteered his services. And, at Tatalovich's request, a team of F.B.I. fingerprint specialists were scheduled to arrive on Saturday morning. Nonetheless, having surveyed the carnage at the crash site, Tatalovich told reporters he doubted whether more than twenty or twenty-five per cent of the victims would be positively identified.

BACK at the command post that afternoon, Haueter was on the phone to the Safety Board lab in Washington. Investigators there had pried open the flight-data recorder, and found it in even worse condition than the cockpit voice recorder. Inside, they discovered dirt and pieces of insulation. The memory module had separated from its mounts and crashed through all the circuit boards. But the module itself was intact. The investigators connected it to a working flight-data recorder, kept in the lab especially for this purpose, and downloaded all the data.

As Haueter had feared, Flight 427's recorder was one of the more primitive varieties. It had monitored only eleven basic flight parameters. It did not directly record the positions of flight-control surfaces—the ailerons, spoilers, leading-edge slats, and rudder. But it did provide some of the first clues about what had happened to Flight 427.

The most striking thing that Haueter and his Safety Board colleagues noticed was a one-second burst in airspeed, from around a hundred and ninety knots to above a hundred and ninety-five knots, and then, a second later, back below a hundred and ninety knots. This had occurred twenty-six seconds before the moment of impact. Since it is physically impossible for an object the size and mass of a Boeing 737 to accelerate and decelerate in such a fashion, the investigators considered the likelihood that the speed spike was simply a bad data point. But the spike was accompanied by small, rapid fluctuations in vertical and longitudinal acceleration, which the passengers on board would have felt as mild g forces. All in all, it bore the classic signs of an encounter with turbulence. The speed spike, the investigators theorized, might reflect a change in air pressure which the sensors had momentarily read as a burst of speed.

"It's Irv Pelton, Mr. Mather, from the Voice Crying in the Wilderness Department."

The flight-data recorder also showed that the plane's heading had changed by two degrees, nose left, three seconds after the speed spike, and, a second later, an abrupt change of almost six degrees to the left. The heading changes suggested that the plane had experienced a yawing moment—that the tail section had swung to the right while the nose moved left. It had, in essence, skidded in the air.

Yaws are almost always induced by a movement of the rudder, the large, hinged vertical panel in the tail. Like the rudder of a ship, the rudder of an airplane can be used to change the plane's direction, but in practice pilots on commercial jet transports rarely use it for that purpose. Yaws discommode passengers: they create lateral acceleration—especially toward the rear of a plane—that can knock passengers off their feet and break bones. To change headings, commercial pilots use the ailerons, small horizontal hinged panels at the back edge of each wing, to enter gentle banks. In fact, virtually the only times that commercial pilots use the rudder are in the event of an engine failure on takeoff or when landing in a crosswind, and then the rudder is used to correct a yaw, not to induce it.

But, according to the data recorder, both engines on Flight 427 were functioning normally. Reading down the columns of numbers, the investigators saw that the yawing moment was followed by a sharply increased roll to the left. As the plane's nose pivoted left, the right wing would have moved more swiftly through the air, gaining lift and forcing the left wing down. In the span of a mere eight seconds, the left wing heeled over almost sixty degrees. Seconds later, the bank angle reached a hundred and thirty-eight degrees to the left and the pitch eighty-six degrees nose down—nearly vertical—and by then the crash was inevitable.

Any pilot, especially one of Emmett's experience, should have reacted swiftly and instinctively to a yaw and ensuing roll. He would have turned the steering column to the right, using the ailerons to bring the plane back to level flight. This was not a complicated maneuver. Even a novice pilot in a Piper Cub would have the skill and the sense to do it.

But Haueter could not know what Emmett had done. A more advanced flight-data recorder, one that monitored the position of the flight-control surfaces, would have told him. It might also have revealed the cause of the yaw, but that information was lost to Haueter forever. He and the other investigators would have to piece together by deduction and inference what had happened in those initial seconds of Flight 427's upset.

III—CAUSES DU JOUR

THAT Friday night, at the first progress meeting, Haueter went around the crowded room, person by person, asking, "Who are you and what group are you on?"

"I'm from USAir, and I'm here to observe," said a vice-president of USAir.

"Please leave," said Haueter politely.

"This is important. I'm here to represent the company."

"If you're not participating in the investigation, please leave."

"I'm not going," said the executive.

"Yes, you are," said Haueter.

"Our company rules require that a senior—"

"No," said Haueter. "Your company rules are in conflict with my rules. Please leave right now."

Haueter went through this process every night for the first five days. It took him half an hour. At times, his stomach rebelled at the confrontation. "People got angry, and it burned up a lot of time, but it was necessary," he recalled. "When an accident is so big and controversial, it seems that you're on the verge of losing control at any minute."

Haueter eventually pared attendance at the progress meetings down to a hundred people. Among the ten Safety Board groups assembled at Pittsburgh, there were around ninety investigators, nearly all of whom Haueter came to know by sight, if not by name.

Only about fifty investigators, on average, worked at the crash site itself. On Saturday morning, in the woods, an investigator found a small hydraulic device—one of six actuators on each engine that deploy the thrust reverser. The actuator, from the right engine, appeared open, in the extended position. This seemed highly significant. Thrust reversers are used only to slow a plane on landing, after it has touched down. A midair deployment would cause a catastrophic loss of control. One such deployment had occurred in 1991, on a Boeing 767 departing Bangkok. Everyone on board—two hundred and twenty-three people—had died in that crash.

On Sunday, the power-plant group discovered two more right-engine actuators that seemed to be in the deployed position. By contrast, five of the six actuators for the left engine—one was still missing—had been found in the stowed position. The evidence to support a midair deployment of the thrust reverser seemed compelling, but it was also baffling. If the right engine had suddenly reversed thrust, it would have caused the plane's nose to pivot violently to the right. Yet the flight-data recorder showed that the plane had rolled hard left. Trying to fit the facts to the theory, some investigators speculated that a partial deployment—deployment of one of the two sleeves—might have created a bizarre aerodynamic condition sufficient to roll the plane left. This hypothesis met with skepticism in some quarters, and, late at night, as the parties gathered behind closed doors in their hotel rooms, even with ridicule. As for Haueter, he wasn't interested in theories as much as in facts, and the fact of the open actuators could be neither denied nor explained.

In the days that followed, one interesting fact after another emerged, along with theories to accommodate them. Each theory, in turn, became known among the investigators as the *cause du jour.* The power-plant group, for example, reported on Sunday that after an exhaustive search it could not find the rear mount that secured the right engine to the wing pylon. The engine-mount theory became Monday's *cause du jour.* Unlike the thrust-reverser theory, a failure of the right-rear engine mount, resulting in the engine's tilting upward, might have rolled the plane to the left.

The engine mount finally did turn up, in the USAir hangar, much to the embarrassment of the power-plant group. It had been found on Friday and removed from the site, but someone had failed to log it in. Haueter quietly fumed. But by then suspicious fractures in the actuator of the No. 1 leading-edge slat had become the new *cause du jour.* And the thrust-reverser conundrum was solved when investigators dismantled those actuators and found they had not, in fact, been deployed; the rods connected to the pistons had broken off on impact, so the actuators only looked as if they were extended.

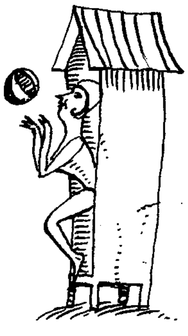
Within three days, Haueter and the assembled investigators had learned a great deal about the circumstances of the accident but nothing to suggest a probable cause. The meteorology group reported that the day of the event had been calm, with no weather advisories and no discernible bird activity, and other pilots had reported no turbulence. The operations group, investigating the personal histories and careers of Emmett and Germano, found unblemished records—no disciplinary actions, no evidence of unusual medical problems. The human-performance group, looking into the pilots' last seventy-two hours, found no indication of erratic behavior, or drug or alcohol use. They had not yet succeeded, however, in finding the pilots' remains, for alcohol and drug testing—standard in all Safety Board accident investigations. Haueter pressed them to continue their search.

After the Sunday progress meeting, Ed Kittel, the bomb expert, called Calvin Walbert, his colleague at the F.A.A. Aviation Explosives Security Unit. He told Walbert that he'd uncovered no evidence of an explosion yet, but that the investigation was still wide open. Since Kittel was occupied full time at the crash site examining wreckage, he needed Walbert's help at the morgue. Standard procedure in a suspected bomb investigation calls for X-ray examination of all human remains, on the theory that bomb components or shrapnel bearing an explosive signature might be embedded in the victims' flesh.

Walbert arrived in Pittsburgh on Monday and took his station at the morgue. A pathologist removed foreign particles embedded in the body parts, and Walbert scrutinized each artifact in turn. By the time he finished his grisly task, eight days later, he had many buckets of metal and plastic debris, but none of it pointed to a bomb exploding aboard Flight 427.

Up at the crash site, Kittel found no evidence of a bomb, either. On Thursday, with all but the smallest fragments removed from the site, he departed for the USAir hangar, where the structures group had begun laying out the wreckage in a rough approximation of the airplane. "By then I was feeling pretty confident it was not an explosion," Kittel recalled. "I would have been surprised if I'd found something in the hangar that I'd missed in the field."

Not far from Kittel's decontamination station, two doctors, one from the F.A.A.'s Civil Aeromedical Institute and the other a USAir flight surgeon, searched for the remains of Germano and Emmett. They concentrated their efforts, quite logically, on the grid where the greatest number of cockpit fragments were found. Their work commanded the interest of all the parties to the investigation, for there was a lot at stake—potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in liability—in ascertaining whether the body parts presumed to belong to Emmett and Germano were free of alcohol and drugs. The rear of the plane, after all, had met the front with explosive force within a fraction of a second of impact: bodies and seats had hurtled forward, and some of those bodies had just consumed alcohol served by the USAir flight attendants.



The doctors relied heavily on circumstantial evidence, looking for flesh and bone in proximity to the cockpit and to scraps of USAir uniform and other personal effects. Under better circumstances, they might have hoped to find the pilots' heads, and used the teeth to provide positive identification and the vitreous of the eyeball, which can resist deterioration up to three days, for toxicological tests. These circumstances, however, were far from ideal. There were no intact heads, never mind organs as fragile as eyeballs.

The doctors sorted through countless human remains, looking for leads—for part of a hand, for example, bearing a wedding band, or some other personal effect a family member would recognize. By late in the week, the morgue had singled out several items, including part of an upper left arm and sections of muscle from the lower-lumbar, thoracic, and cervical vertebrae. Pathologists shipped these remains to the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, in Maryland.

DNA analysis confirmed that the specimens came from two distinct individuals, but positive identification of the pilots awaited DNA samples from their nearest relatives. Emmett's mother contributed a blood sample. Some of the remains presumed to be Emmett's proved, in fact, to be his. Germano's relatives declined to provide specimens. Haueter says he does not know why.

And there matters might have rested, with Germano unidentified, were it not for a fortuitous discovery. The investigators had also found, in the same general area as the presumed remains, the thin sole of a foot that had been pared off, in the words of one investigator, as if with a cheese slicer. As it happened, Germano had served in the Air Force, the only branch of the service that routinely footprints its air-crew members. The F.B.I. printed the sole, and it matched Germano's footprint. The sole, inadequate for toxicological testing, provided a DNA sample that confirmed the identity of Germano's other body parts.

In the end, the remains of both Germano and Emmett tested free of drugs but positive for small amounts of ethanol. This, the investigators agreed, was almost certainly the product of putrefaction—of five days of exposure and decay at the crash site.

HAUETER heard from Washington that a pilot, a member of the cockpit-voice-recorder team, had detected a sound on the tape—it was described as a "whoosh"—that the pilot thought might have come from the electronics-and-equipment-bay door blowing open. That door was just behind the nosewheel, and if it had blown open in flight the voice recorder might have captured just such a sound. Moreover, a door blowing open in flight might have played a role in the ensuing upset. Suddenly, the door became a *cause du jour*. Members of the structures group rummaged through dozens of bins of debris. They found mangled parts of the door, most significantly a four-by-nine-inch section with the latching mechanism and a piece of the frame attached. The pin was down, in the latched position. Some weeks later, Haueter learned that further analysis of the voice recorder had determined that the "whoosh" might be Germano taking a sharp breath. "Once somebody raises it, you've got to chase it down," Haueter remarked, with a shrug.

Finding all the doors and hatches—there are eleven on a 737—was a priority, as it is in every accident investigation. Only one eyewitness out of dozens interviewed reported seeing anything fall from the plane before it plummeted to earth, and this witness was a six-year-old boy. But other reports had come in from residents who'd found small pieces of insulation and a business card belonging to one of the passengers more than two miles from the crash site. This suggested the possibility of a door having come open.

Haueter sent helicopters to conduct an aerial search of the last fifteen miles of the plane's flight path. The searchers spotted a large blue-and-white object high in a tree. It turned out to be a kite. On Wednesday, the sixth day of the investigation, a hundred and forty volunteers—pilots, mechanics, and ordinary people—and twenty rescue workers took to the ground. They found nothing from the plane.

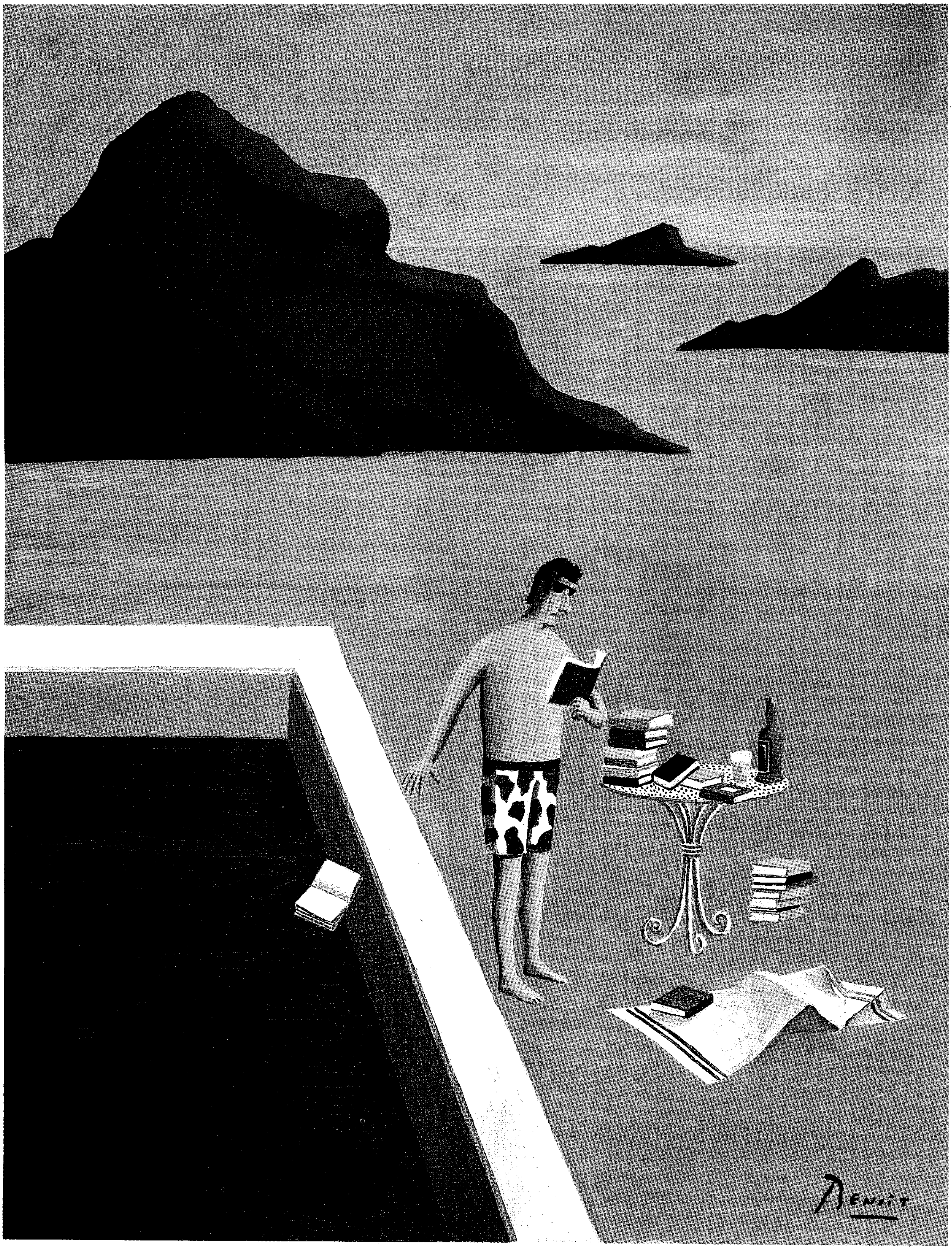
Haueter made a point of visiting the crash site twice a day, but his real work took place at the command post. Several of the investigative groups never went to the crash site. Some members of the aircraft-performance group, for example, spent their time in air-conditioned offices, parsing the flight-data recorder's raw numbers and matching them with the radar tracking plot.

They made several important discoveries. Working with the radar track, they found that USAir 427 had intersected the flight path of the preceding Delta 727 at virtually the precise moment of the yaw. The Delta, they calculated, was at that time 4.2 miles ahead of Flight 427—about a minute and ten seconds—and three hundred feet higher. F.A.A. regulations call for a minimum lateral separation of three miles, and the planes had kept well outside that limit. But it appeared probable that Flight 427 had encountered the Delta's wake vortex, which, given the calmness of the day, would have descended largely intact. Moreover, it provided a possible explanation for the turbulence that had resulted in the phantom speed spike.

Two things, then, appeared to have come together at a moment in time—a wake-vortex encounter and the yaw. Yet it seemed preposterous to the investigators that a wake vortex could induce a yaw that would flip a plane the size of a 737 into a fatal roll. Pilots routinely encounter wake vortices, especially near busy airports. "It probably occurs four times an hour at National Airport," Haueter said. "If it's a

EASEL · BY BENOÎT VAN INNIS

LES VACANCES DU CRITIQUE LITTÉRAIRE



AIR CONDITIONING
and a movie

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problem, why isn't the ground littered with 737s falling out of the sky?"

Nonetheless, he accepted the vortex as a fact, another in a large mosaic of facts.

GREG PHILLIPS, meanwhile, had spent much of the week up at the crash site and at the USAir hangar, where he supervised the work of his group, aircraft systems. He and Haueter did not see much of each other, except at the evening progress meetings and again, briefly, in the mornings, when Haueter met for twenty minutes with the Safety Board group leaders. "I don't have to give Greg a lot of direction," Haueter said. "He's capable of running without my guidance. I wish I could clone him and have him do several things at once."

Until the moment Phillips first saw the printout of the flight-data recorder, he'd given no thought to Colorado Springs, the accident he'd worked on to no avail for almost two years. But the flight data and the tracking plots now drawn up by the performance group bore a distinct similarity to what had happened at Colorado Springs. Both 737s had experienced a catastrophic loss of control on approach—a yaw followed by a violent roll, loss of lift, and an almost vertical plunge.

There were differences, of course. Colorado Springs had happened at one thousand feet, not six thousand; the plane had rolled right, not left; and the yaw had not been nearly as severe. Turbulence had become a major issue in that investigation. Mountain wind rotors—horizontal funnels of air coming off the Rockies—had been reported on the day of the crash. But other, lighter planes had landed without incident that day, and, moreover, a mountain rotor had never been known to knock a plane the size of a 737 out of the sky.

The Colorado Springs investigation ultimately came down to an examination of the plane's rudder system. It was up to Phillips to determine whether the power-control units that drove the rudder had malfunctioned. That plane had a history of rudder "bumps," as they are called. In the week before the crash, two different flight crews had reported uncommanded rudder movements resulting in yaws, both to the right, the direction of the fatal roll. On both occasions, mechanics had made repairs to the yaw damper, a device that during flight makes fine adjustments to the rudder position. Swept-wing aircraft require yaw dampers because of an aerodynamic phenomenon known as Dutch roll—a tendency to oscillate back and forth, as someone on ice skates might. The yaw damper, which, by design, can move the rudder only a few degrees in either direction, dampens these oscillations automatically, without constant input by the pilot.

Yaw dampers have proved over the years to be one of the most troublesome components of the 737's flight-control systems. But, because of their built-in limitation, investigators don't believe they pose a threat to flight safety. Confronted with an erratic yaw damper, many pilots have been trained, and others have simply learned, to switch the system off.

All the same, there's no doubt in Phillips's mind that the yaw dampers on the Boeing 737 could be made more reliable. And it was obviously significant that yaw-damper troubles had preceded the Colorado Springs crash. Throughout the twenty-one-month investigation, Phillips examined and tested those fire-damaged rudder systems, including components salvaged from the yaw damper. He found plenty that was wrong—wear and galling on the standby rudder power-control unit, for example—but in the end he did not find a malfunction that would have caused the crash.

That investigation closed without a finding of probable cause. The final report listed a number of possibilities, including the rudder system and an unusual atmospheric event. In the minds of some of the investigators, the rudder system remains the most likely culprit. Boeing, however, believes differently. It has stated that a mountain rotor probably caused the Colorado Springs crash. Boeing's opinion notwithstanding, the Colorado Springs investigation and a subsequent event—the freezing up of a rudder on a United 737 just before takeoff at O'Hare Airport in 1992—resulted in the F.A.A. ordering improvements in the rudder power-control units on all Boeing 737s by 1999. In the interim, the F.A.A. requires airlines to test the units every seven hundred and fifty flight hours for signs of a jam or leakage of hydraulic fluid.

With memories of the Colorado Springs investigation fresh in his mind, Phillips treated USAir 427's rudder system with elaborate care. At the crash site, he and his team opened access panels on the tail section and found, to their good fortune, the main and standby power-control units and the yaw-damper system largely intact, with hydraulic lines, torque tubes, and input rods still connected. Phillips took photographs and measurements before removing the entire tail section to the USAir hangar.

In the hangar, the team cut through the tail's aluminum skin and shimmed the main input crank, which responds to the pilot's commands, with safety wire to preserve its exact position. They cut away the attachments and extracted the power-control units. The entire device, which weighs sixty-five pounds and costs about a hundred thousand dollars, consists of dual concentric servo valves—two piston-like slides, one within the other—that move in concert, causing the rudder to move. The valves are manufactured to extremely fine tolerances: the gap between the outer slide and the housing is two microns, one-fortieth the thickness a human hair, and the slides themselves move a distance less than the thickness of a dime. Yet the power-control unit drives the rudder through its full arc, fifty-two degrees, from one stop to the other.

Phillips did not have the equipment to test a device so finely calibrated. Because he didn't want to risk shipping it, he intended to carry the piece by hand to Boeing's facilities outside Seattle as soon as his work in Pittsburgh drew to a close.

And it was quickly drawing to a close. By Friday, September 16th, eight days after the crash, all the groups had completed their on-site documentation of the wreckage. Haueter accepted an offer from the U.S. Bureau of Mines to have ground-penetrating radar brought in to search for the last buried fragments of the plane. On Saturday, a team of dogs swept the site, searching for human remains overlooked by the recovery crews. Wayne Tatalovich, the county coroner, said he now believed that the morgue crews would succeed in identifying sixty per cent of the passengers.

On Sunday, Haueter prepared to depart for Washington, D.C. Earlier in the week, he told a reporter at the hangar, “We have a lot of data. We have a lot of airplane. . . . We just need time now to go through all this.” At the last press conference, he admitted that, as the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* put it, he had “no working theory at this point about what caused the plane to flip over and slam into the earth.”

IV—GET ON WITH LIFE

In the months that followed, one question occupied Haueter and every other USAir 427 investigator: What had caused the yaw? The leading scenario, acknowledged by many, was a malfunction of the rudder in conjunction with a wake-vortex encounter. But Haueter wanted no possibility left unexamined. And the possibilities, once adduced, seemed virtually endless—structural deformation of the vertical stabilizer, a collapsed floor beam impinging on the rudder cables, an electrical short circuit, a tire explosion in the wheel well severing a cable. Accordingly, all the investigative groups remained operational.

The structures group returned three times that fall to the USAir hangar at the Pittsburgh airport, where the wreckage remained under Safety Board lock and key. In October, Haueter decided that the structures group would have to reconstruct the airplane. The group obtained from Boeing full-size blueprints, and laid them out on the hangar floor. To assist, the Safety Board brought over from Britain two senior investigators from the Air Accidents Investigation Branch. One of them, David King, had coördinated the reconstruction of the Pan Am 747 that crashed at Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988.

The structures group, now numbering more than thirty, spent nearly three weeks at the hangar. Its members concentrated their efforts on the floor beams, the rudder cables, the forward pressure bulkhead, the wheel wells, and the auxiliary fuel tank. They did most of their work with micrometers, measuring the thickness of thousands of tiny fragments of debris and comparing it to Boeing specifications for given parts of the airplane. “An extremely daunting task,” David King later observed. Comparing it to Lockerbie, he said, “The challenge presented by Flight 427 was a much more severe one. . . . Lockerbie had broken up in the air and the pieces had fallen to the ground. This plane had been driven at much higher speed into the ground.”

The operations group, meanwhile, had tracked down passengers from USAir's flight to Chicago. They found Captain Jackson, who had flown in the cockpit jump seat behind Germano and Emmett,

“Miss Coleman, would you step in here, please, and take a Martini.”

and the businessman who had complained about the strange noise from the cabin ceiling. Neither could provide any significant information. To this day, the investigators have not found the woman who, in apparent concern for her husband's safety, spoke with the USAir maintenance foreman in Chicago.

At the cockpit-voice-recorder lab in Washington, Jim Cash invited pilots of 737s in to listen to the accident tape. Initially, none could come up with an explanation for the thumps or the clicks. They could not recall hearing those particular sounds, although they could not be certain that they'd never heard them, either. In most respects, the sounds seemed unremarkable, perhaps caused by something as banal as a flight bag falling over or a pilot moving his foot. It was not the sounds themselves so much as when they occurred that made them significant.

The performance group, attempting to replicate the sequence of numbers gleaned from USAir 427's flight-data recorder, flew more than two hundred runs on Boeing's flight simulator, testing all kinds of maneuvers and failure and malfunction scenarios. They also constructed a kinematic model, using the eleven known parameters from the flight-data recorder and other pieces of information—such as the rate of the wind and the plane's center of gravity—to arrive at the aerodynamic coefficients necessary to divine the position of the 737's flight controls. Since they were dealing with many variables—the speed and position of the plane as well as the wake vortex—the possible permutations seemed almost infinite. No single scenario provided a perfect match. Within the confines of the known parameters, they couldn't seem to make the simulator do what they knew the plane had done.

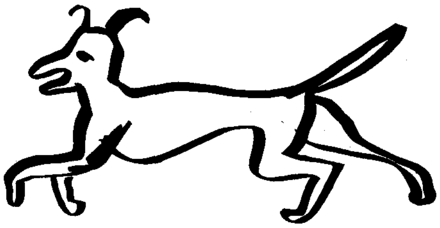
But they came very close. The best match occurred with the rudder jammed all the way over to the left, at between twenty and twenty-two degrees. By now, everyone agreed that for this accident to happen the rudder had to have moved. But what had caused it to move?

Greg Phillips, with the power-control unit in his custody, attempted to determine whether it was the culprit. The systems group convened first at Boeing and then at the facilities of the Parker Hannifin Corporation, the manufacturer of the main power-control unit. At the Parker labs, in Irvine, California, the investigators drained the hydraulic fluid, which they saved for analysis of contamination, and disassembled the unit. Under microscopes, they examined the valves and their housing for evidence of abnormal wear, binding, or galling. Back at Boeing, they had found a small amount of galling on the standby rudder unit (which was not made by Parker), but they found nothing on the main. They reassembled the unit, mounted it on a test stand, and ran it repeatedly, driving it to the limit of its stops. It functioned normally.

The new chairman of the Safety Board, James Hall, convened a public hearing into the crash of USAir 427 in late January, 1995, four and a half months after the accident. He opened the hearing by admitting that it was "no secret that the aviation community is concerned about this accident . . . because this is the second accident in nearly four years involving a Boeing 737 for which as yet no cause has been readily identified."

The hearing lasted five days. Thirty-one witnesses testified about all areas of the investigation. One of them was David King, who had assisted the structures group in its reconstruction efforts. King told the following story.

On October 7, 1993, a British Airways Boeing 747 with three hundred and eighty-nine passengers on board took off from London's Heathrow Airport en route to Bangkok. It followed by only two minutes the departure of another fully laden 747. As the Bangkok-bound plane gained flight, climbing past a hundred feet, the pilot retracted the landing gear. At that instant, the plane's nose abruptly pitched down, from fourteen degrees to eight degrees. The pilot immediately pulled back on the control column, and the plane continued its ascent, though at a much diminished rate. Six to eight seconds later, the nose of the 747 pitched sharply up in response to the pilot's continued demand on the yoke, and thereafter the controls responded normally. By his quick action, the pilot had probably averted an accident. Once safely aloft, the crew debated what to do next. They speculated that they might have encountered wake turbulence from the preceding 747. Since the controls now seemed to function normally, the pilot elected to go on to Bangkok, and the plane landed there without incident. In Bangkok, engineers checked the control systems and the hydraulics, and pulled the cassette from the quick-access recorder, which contained more than two hundred flight-data parameters. They sent the cassette back to London. Meanwhile, since the engineers had found nothing amiss, the plane embarked on a four-day flight sequence that took it to Australia and back to Bangkok without any recurrence of the Heathrow incident.



In London, a British Airways team downloaded the recorder and discovered that the elevators on either side of the tail—the flight-control surfaces that determine a plane's pitch—had moved in opposite directions. The left elevator had gone up, in the correctly commanded position to climb; the right one had gone down fifteen degrees, an uncommanded position that caused the plane's nose to pitch downward.

The airline immediately ordered the removal of the 747's right inboard elevator's power-control unit, a dual concentric servo valve that had been manufactured by Parker Hannifin and was strikingly similar in design and function to the one that powers rudder movements on 737s. It sent the unit to Parker for testing. Parker found that it functioned without flaw. Boeing, which had assisted Parker, advanced a hypothesis: that a foreign object in the hydraulic fluid might have caused a momentary jam between the primary and the secondary valves, but any evidence of such a jam was lost. This report arrived on David King's desk. He, his colleagues, and British Airways, unsatisfied with the explanation, demanded a more thorough investigation.

In the end, the investigators determined that the secondary slide in the unit's servo valve had been driven all the way to its internal stops, in the opposite direction from the primary slide, causing a cross-flow in the valve. This had occurred, they theorized, either because of air in the hydraulic system, introduced during maintenance, or a surge of hydraulic fluid. The retraction of the landing gear had caused a pressure spike in the hydraulic system, forcing the secondary slide to its stops and the elevators in the wrong direction.

David King felt that this event would, in all likelihood, have been written off as a wake-vortex encounter if not for a data recorder that monitored hundreds of parameters. What was more to the point, the event happened only once, even though the plane continued to fly for four more days before mechanics made repairs.

It seemed entirely possible that just such a transient anomaly, elusive and maddening, had afflicted the rudder power-control unit on USAir 427. Finding such gremlins, as King testified, is difficult even with a completely intact system. Greg Phillips and his team had only fragmented systems to work with.

"The best thing you can do," Phillips said many months into the investigation, "is to find something that broke. We aren't going to miss it if it broke. In Colorado Springs and Pittsburgh, the things we've found aren't broken."

Soon after the hearings, Phillips and Thomas Jacky, the head of the performance group, arranged to get data from the quick-access recorders mounted on the 737 fleet of a European airline, which records far more flight-data parameters than American carriers do. Jacky searched the data for yaws or rudder anomalies of any sort. He found that the rudders rarely exceeded the three degrees of movement that fell within the authority of the yaw damper. In those few instances when they did, the pilots had always commanded the movement.

"The economy *is* *better under Clinton, but I give all the credit to Greenspan."*

• •

MANY months into the investigation, Haueter sat at his desk at the Safety Board offices, across the river from National Airport, where planes rise into the air every few minutes, generating one wake vortex after another. He had before him a thick stack of mail from concerned citizens who, aware of the Safety Board's perplexity, had written to offer their theories.

"I thought of writing you earlier," one correspondent stated, "but delayed doing so because I thought you'd solve it." Another called the Safety Board incompetent bunglers who couldn't do anything. Some of the letters suggested pilot error, others saboteurs and mad bombers. A missive in bold black ink stated, "Autopilot Did It," and, beneath that, "My opinion only." Several writers suggested equipping planes with large parachutes to avert future high-impact crashes. Another, having obviously read about the gruesome process of identifying victims from body parts, suggested painting passengers in different hues before permitting them to board planes.

"That'll sell a lot of tickets," Haueter said.

But he was not amused. By an edict of the chairman, who often likes to remind Safety Board employees that they are public servants, Haueter must answer all letters, and his replies must be reasoned, not perfunctory. When he tried responding in polite, formulaic prose, he found that his correspondents would write again, and again, until they got a solid answer.

"We're dealing on a level of excruciatingly small detail," Haueter said as he went through his correspondence. "It's hard to keep the interest level of people up. Parties to the investigation sometimes seem to have lost interest. People are saying, 'Get on with life.' They call it the investigation from hell around here. For me, personally, it'll never go away. Professionally, Greg and I will be chasing 737s around the world every time they have a small glitch."

And so the investigation dragged on, with small clues emerging from the examination and reëxamination of every piece of evidence. The rudder-pedal assemblies for both the pilot and the first officer, for example, had been found in the wreckage. Although they were fragmented and heavily distorted, a Safety Board metallurgist determined that both left pedals had fractured upon impact in approximately the same place—near the pivot lugs at the top of the support tubes—whereas both right pedals, bent but intact, had remained attached to their support tubes. Hoping that this particular pattern of damage might shed light on the crew's use of the rudder, the human-performance group met in June of 1995 with the deputy medical examiner of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. After studying the metallurgical evidence and other pertinent material, the deputy medical examiner offered one tentative explanation: "The symmetrical pattern of rudder-pedal fractures suggests a similar extension of the legs of both crew members, probably with both left legs extended and in contact with the rudder pedals, at the time of impact."

If this was true, it meant that Emmett and Germano, standing hard on the left rudder pedals, had actually steered the plane into its fatal bank. This seemed counterintuitive to almost everyone. It met with heated debate, even derision, among some investigators—especially those from USAir and the pilots' union. Haueter, in the cause of leaving no stone unturned, pronounced it "interesting." It was, after all, a *fact* that the rudder pedals had been sheared. But he reserved judgment on the extended-leg theory. It seemed far more likely that the pedals had sheared because of the angle of the descent—nose slightly to the left—and the pilots' bracing themselves for impact.

This extended-leg theory seemed to some like a reading of entrails—a sign, perhaps, that the investigation was foundering. But Haueter was not without a plan. After lengthy consultation with his superiors at the Safety Board, he decided to stage a wake-vortex test using a 727 and a 737 configured in the same manner as the Delta and the USAir planes on the day of the accident. This plan struck some as worthy and others as a waste of time and money: after all, wake-vortex encounters were supposedly common occurrences for line pilots. Haueter, for his part, felt he could not consider the investigation complete without such a test.

At the F.A.A. Technical Center, at the Atlantic City airport, the investigators rigged the wingtips of an F.A.A.-owned 727 with smoke generators to mark the wake vortices. They outfitted the 737, on loan from USAir, with advanced flight-data and cockpit voice recorders and with seven video cameras. As the week of the test drew near, speculation among the investigators about what they would find grew heated. Some were convinced the wake vortex, properly intercepted, would cause the 737 to yaw dramatically. Others were equally certain that wouldn't happen. Haueter tried to keep an open mind, but on balance he sided with the skeptics.

The tests started on September 25th and ran for seven days. The test pilots, from the F.A.A., Boeing, and USAir, flew once, and sometimes twice a day. They flew toward the wake of the 727 more than a hundred and sixty times. Both the investigators and the test pilots, able to see for the first time the twin vortices coming off either wingtip of the 727, were astonished at their durability. In calm weather, they remained tightly coiled, with a core diameter of between four and five feet, for four or five miles or more. The vortices typically descended about three hundred feet behind the 727—the exact difference in altitude between USAir 427 and the Delta 727 at the moment of upset—and remained there until they dissipated.

The F.A.A. test pilot, Lester Berven, testifying at a second Safety Board hearing about his experience during the vortex test, said, "We put the airplane into the vortex in every position that could be done, wingwise and tailwise and fuselagewise. We went up and down and crosswise, and rolling and non-rolling. We stayed in the vortex for half an hour total, right in the middle of one or two, or both of them."

Asked by the board of inquiry whether any of the vortex encounters had created any upset, Berven replied, "No, there was very little effect on pitch or yaw. There was some turbulence, of course, but no sustained pitch or yaw at all. . . . You can just pull right up in there with absolute impunity and fly anywhere you want with respect to either one or both of those vortices without a controllability problem."

The USAir pilot, John Cox, also testified. "We put several parts of the airplane carefully in the vortex, looking for yaw," he said. "Particularly with the fin only in the [vortex] core, and with the yaw damper off, I had expected a fair amount of yaw, and it wasn't there."

Nor did Berven or Cox, who was a professional pilot of twenty-two years' experience, find the vortex encounters startling or disorienting. "It was consistent pretty much with things we see on the line," Cox said. "Operating in and out of the East Coast, we go into high-density airports with great frequency. On a three-day trip, it's normal to come across the wake vortex of traffic. . . . In a line operation, you never know they're coming. . . . I don't know if it's [a] surprise, because it rapidly goes to identifying what it is and going on. . . . It doesn't cause a reflex action or grave concern."

In contrast, the Boeing test pilot, replying to questions put to him by Boeing's director of air-safety investigation, was prompted to agree that wake-vortex encounters had the potential to startle, confuse, and even threaten pilots.

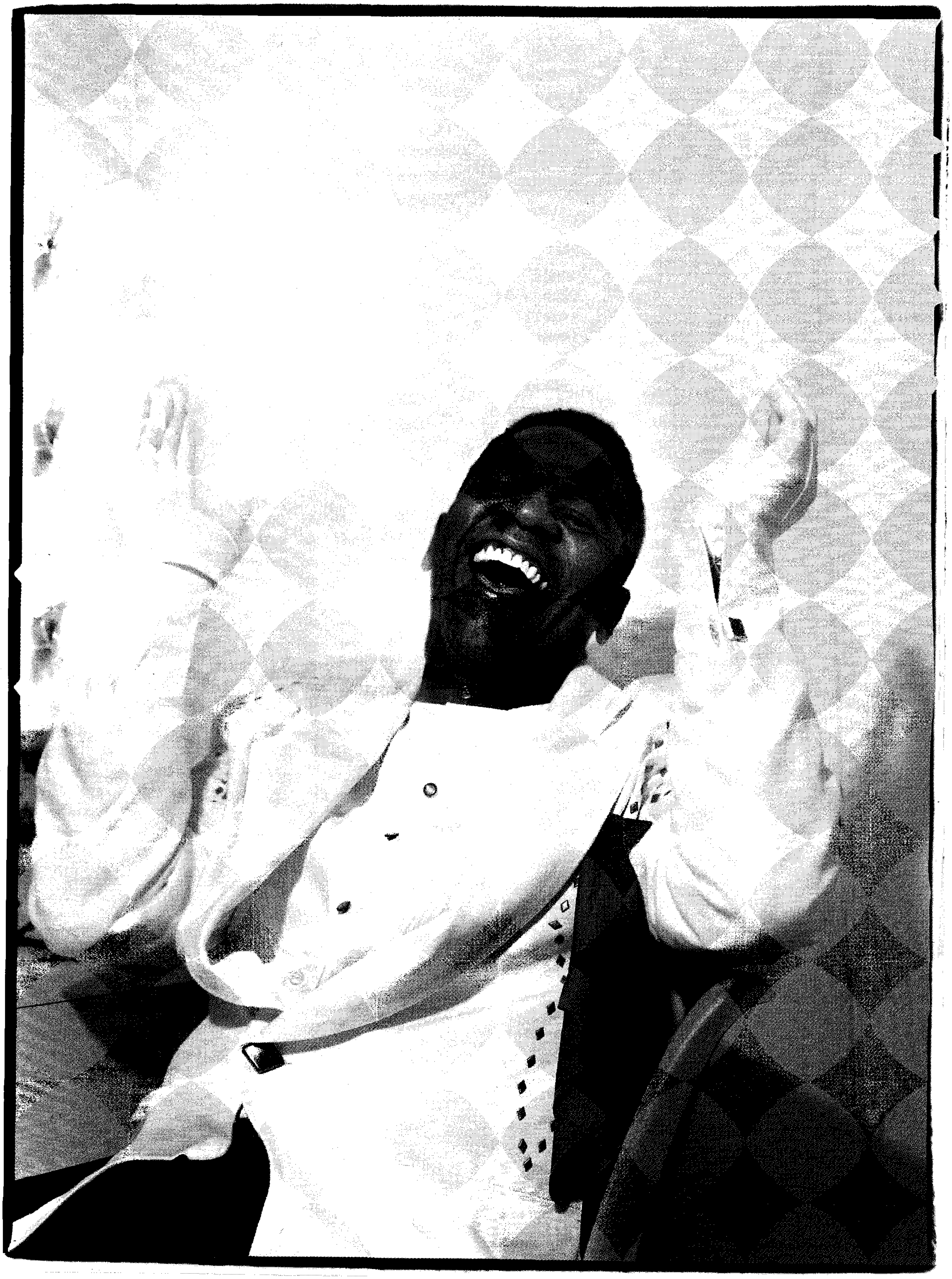
As it turned out, the investigator who had expected the least new information from the wake-vortex test got the most. Jim Cash reviewed the cockpit-voice-recorder tapes from all the test flights. On the first day of the test, one of the pilots reported hearing sounds as the plane intercepted the wake vortex of the 727. This pilot, however, did not think that the sounds were the same as the muted thumps on the USAir 427 tape.

But when Cash listened to the test plane's tape, the thumps sounded to him "identical" to those on the USAir 427 tape. This wasn't just a matter of Cash's finely tuned ear. The test pilot had heard only the airborne sounds, whereas the

KING OF SOUL

Born in Forrest City, Arkansas, in 1946, to a family of gospel singers, the Reverend Al Green spent his childhood steeped in fire and brimstone; two decades later, he was churning out aphrodisiacal pop like "Let's Stay Together" and "Here I Am (Come and Take Me)." In 1974, a girlfriend poured boiling grits on his back and then killed herself—a lurid, tabloid-ready incident that set Green back on the righteous path. Ordained as a pastor in 1976, he renounced secular music and unleashed his mighty falsetto on a series of gospel records whose evangelical fervor suggested a direct link with God. Last year, Green released "Your Heart's in Good Hands," his first secular album in almost two decades, and on August 8th—just four months after his fiftieth birthday—he will perform a program of both gospel and soul, at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall.

Al Green, in Minneapolis, photographed by Neil Selkirk.



voice recorder also captured the sounds transmitted through the plane's structure. "The structure-borne sounds give the wake thumps a more bassy resonance than when you just hear them," Cash explained. Moreover, when USAir 427's thumps were plotted on a sound-frequency graph, they looked identical to the thumps of the test plane.

The thumps occurred only when the test plane intercepted the vortices at certain angles. This gave the test pilots a heightened awareness of cockpit noises. The Boeing pilot noticed that the cockpit windshield wipers lifted off the windshield during certain vortex intercepts. He believed that they might be the source of the mysterious clickety-clicks. Cash, however, remained uncommitted. The test recorder did not capture those sounds; it captured only the Boeing pilot saying, "There was the click."

In his lab at the Safety Board, some months after the wake-vortex test, Cash said, "I don't think I can squeeze a lot more out of the Pittsburgh tape. There are still some sounds that are unknown. One, in particular, still nags at me. It has body to it, resonance. There are lots of metal-to-metal impulse sounds, like a seat belt snapping shut or a switch being thrown. This one isn't like that. It occurs just after he says 'Jetstream,' between that and the thump, thump, thump, right around when he says 'Sheez'—during those four seconds when the upset began. It's in a very bad spot, as far as not providing any idea what it is. There's a lot of noise in cockpits, and, experience has shown, most of it doesn't mean anything. It sounds like maybe a briefcase or a suitcase falling over. But I haven't heard it before. It's unusual, and it's in a bad spot."

THE wake-vortex test provided interesting information, but it failed to yield any hard evidence concerning the cause of the crash. Haueter had no choice but to press doggedly on. Last January, when a twenty-seven-year-old 737 was retired from service and destined for a museum of flight, he and Phillips jumped at the chance to work on it. Haueter, Phillips, and the rest of the systems group conceived a new battery of tests for the rudder system. Haueter admitted that these were "really extreme tests, extreme limits, almost bizarre tests," which could be conducted only on an Iron Bird—a plane never meant to fly again—because of their destructive nature. Among other things, they subjected the rudder section to repetitive swings; they cut rudder cables to see what the snap sounded like; they jammed the standby rudder actuator and jammed it again; they took up the aisle flooring at the front of the plane—the "soft and spongy" spot noted by maintenance on USAir 427—and pressed increasingly heavy loads on the rudder cables. The rudder, of course, did move, but only fractionally. Having tested "the outer limits of probability," as Phillips put it, the investigators, in the end, did not find the results especially fruitful.

When, in April, the plane carrying Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown—a military version of the 737—crashed in Croatia, Haueter and Phillips went to investigate. In itself, this was unusual, for the military guards its own crash investigations closely, rarely requesting the presence of the Safety Board. But the accident shed no light on Pittsburgh or on Colorado Springs. It appeared that bad weather, outdated navigational equipment, and pilot error had caused that tragedy.

And then, on the morning of June 10th, Haueter heard about an incident that seemed much more pertinent to the Flight 427 investigation. The night before, a Boeing 737 owned by Eastwind Airlines, a small new carrier, had begun its approach to Richmond when the pilot felt a sudden movement of the rudder—a "bump"—and the plane rolled hard to the right. The pilot declared an emergency and, as he later told Haueter, believed he had stood on the left rudder pedal and used asymmetric thrust to bring the plane back to level flight. Haueter and Phillips and investigators from Boeing quickly convened in Richmond to examine the plane. The maintenance records told a story eerily similar to Colorado Springs—three previous complaints of rudder-control anomalies within the preceding month. In each instance, mechanics had replaced parts of the rudder system.

"You get your money back if you don't get laid in seven days."

Thus far, Haueter’s investigation into the Eastwind incident has turned up a misadjusted yaw damper. He and Phillips have plans for more tests, but the incident, to Haueter’s dismay, has not yet shed any new light on Pittsburgh.

Not long ago, in a meeting at the Safety Board, a colleague not involved in the investigation said to Phillips during a heated exchange, “You’ve worked both Colorado Springs and Pittsburgh. Obviously, you can’t figure an accident out.”

The words were spoken in frustration, during discussion of an event unrelated to the investigation, but Phillips acknowledges that they are true. “There’s a tremendous amount of pressure, within myself and from outside, to find out what happened. I want to be certain I’ve looked at everything possible. I want to make sure there’s nothing we can do that hasn’t been done. I’m glad I worked Colorado Springs, or else I’d be wondering about it. On the other hand, since I worked both, I wonder about how people look at me.”

Haueter knows the feeling. “You’ll always be the one who didn’t do it,” he says simply.

In the end, the investigation of Flight 427 has come down to this: the yaw, the ensuing roll, and the crash occurred as the result of either a malfunction in Boeing’s rudder system or an error on the part of the pilots, or a combination of both.

The great majority of accidents—seventy-five per cent or more by most calculations—are attributed to human error on the part of pilots, air-traffic controllers, or maintenance crews. Given these figures, the Air Line Pilots Association has reason for concern that blame for the accident will eventually fall on Emmett and Germano.

None of the parties to the investigation have stated publicly what they believe to be the cause of the crash, but it is not difficult to detect the tenor of Boeing’s sentiments. In the public hearings, Boeing has several times urged the Safety Board to place more emphasis on the human-performance aspects of the crash. A report recently presented to the human-performance group by two Boeing investigators—one of them the test pilot who had flown many of the wake-vortex encounters, the other a former NASA research psychologist—consisted largely of a detailed docket of many previous incidents of pilot error, implying that some precedents existed for a scenario in which Emmett and Germano would have caused the crash. The group declined to accept this report, which some felt contained more opinion than might be warranted at that stage. In the absence of conclusive proof that its rudder system failed, Boeing clearly seeks to direct attention toward the pilots and away from its planes.

Haueter, who will not discuss the contents of the report, acknowledges only this: “Some people—Boeing people, Safety Board people—would argue that the pilots got caught in the wake vortex and reacted badly.”

The Air Line Pilots Association is perfectly aware of this argument. One union representative said, “Our fear is that they’ll try to fit a square peg into a round hole. We’re the square peg.”

GLACES
5¢ 10¢ 15¢

Some interested observers who took no part in the investigation have made known what they believe to be the cause. Arthur Wolk, a Philadelphia lawyer who specializes in aviation disasters and represents the families of a victim of Colorado Springs and several from USAir 427, has amassed an extensive file on the 737 rudder system. “There’s no question that the cause is the same in both cases,” Wolk asserts. “This plane has a long history of rudder-control anomalies . . . instances of the rudder going to positions not selected by the flight crew. I knew Pittsburgh was a rudder hardover from the evening of the accident.”

Wolk is not reticent about expressing his opinion. He did so last November, when the Safety Board chairman, Jim Hall, convened the second public hearing into USAir 427, and asked each of the parties if any aspect of the crash should be explored more thoroughly. Standing before television cameras in a corridor outside the hearing room, Wolk voiced his disdain for the Safety Board’s investigation: “You heard Jim Hall asking Boeing what they should be doing? The head of the Safety Board asking Boeing what it should be doing! That is appalling!”

In his more charitable moments, Wolk concedes that the Safety Board is well intentioned—just seriously myopic. “They’re looking for a broken part,” he explains. “The problem is, you can’t find a broken part. It’s a design problem that allows the rudder to go hardover. You have two components of the power-control unit that have to slide perfectly freely under all circumstances and for the life of the plane. The tolerance for these valves is a fraction of the size of a human hair. You don’t need much to make it not work. Even a momentary binding of the slide can cause the plane to roll upside down before the pilots can ever react.”

Modern jet airplanes are designed with highly redundant systems, which make accidents highly improbable. When they do occur, they are usually the result of a concatenation of discrete events—of mechanical or human failures—any one of which by itself would not likely cause a catastrophe. It is this unforeseen sequence of events, resulting from what accident theorists call the “tight coupling” of complex interacting systems, that causes accidents. In the past thirty years, as aviation technology has grown more sophisticated—and therefore more tightly coupled—it has also grown safer. But those gains in safety have tended to erode under demands that planes fly faster, higher, and in more severe weather conditions. The F.A.A., which has the conflicting mandate of promoting air travel as it polices the air-travel industry, announced a goal of zero accidents early last year. This, of course, sounds like a laudable goal. Perhaps it is just meant to reassure a worried public, for almost no one—and least of all the investigators at the Major Investigations Division of the Safety Board—believes that such a goal is attainable.

The events that led to the crash of Flight 427 and killed a hundred and thirty-two people on September 8, 1994, lasted only twenty-six seconds from the moment of the initial upset to the moment of impact. Of those twenty-six seconds, only about eight seconds are crucial to the understanding of what occurred. After those first eight seconds, the pilots had become passengers.

Almost two years after the crash, Tom Haueter still hopes he will find the solution. But at some point he and Phillips and the other investigators might have to admit that they have learned all that it is humanly possible to learn from the wreckage. At that point, what happened to Flight 427 will become just another mystery among the many we must live with. ♦

OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

ANNE OF RED HAIR

What do the Japanese see in Anne of Green Gables?

BY CALVIN TRILLIN

I CAN'T say that when I heard about the Japanese infatuation with Anne of Green Gables a simple explanation came to mind. It was not immediately clear to me why, for instance, some Japanese couples would travel to Prince Edward Island, the bucolic Canadian province that was the setting for the Anne stories, in order to have a wedding ceremony in the parlor where Lucy Maud Montgomery, the creator of Anne, herself got married, in 1911. Even with reasonably good airline connections, after all, the journey from Tokyo to Charlottetown, P.E.I., takes about twenty hours. Of course, it is well known that the Japanese are regularly gripped with intense enthusiasm for any number of things that Westerners think of as distinctly non-Japanese—fifties doo-wop or bluejeans or Peter Rabbit. On a trip to Japan awhile back, I saw a somewhat frayed jean jacket in a shopwindow priced at the equivalent of three hundred and fifty dollars. I also noticed that during any stroll through a Japanese flea market I spotted at least one framed picture of Audrey Hepburn. A friend of mine who lives in Tokyo told me that someone who gets the sudden urge to see "Love in the Afternoon" can count on finding it playing somewhere in the city. Apparently, the Japanese are gaga for Audrey Hepburn. I have no trouble at all understanding that. I wouldn't call my own feeling for Audrey Hepburn infatuation, but it is, at the least, deep respect.

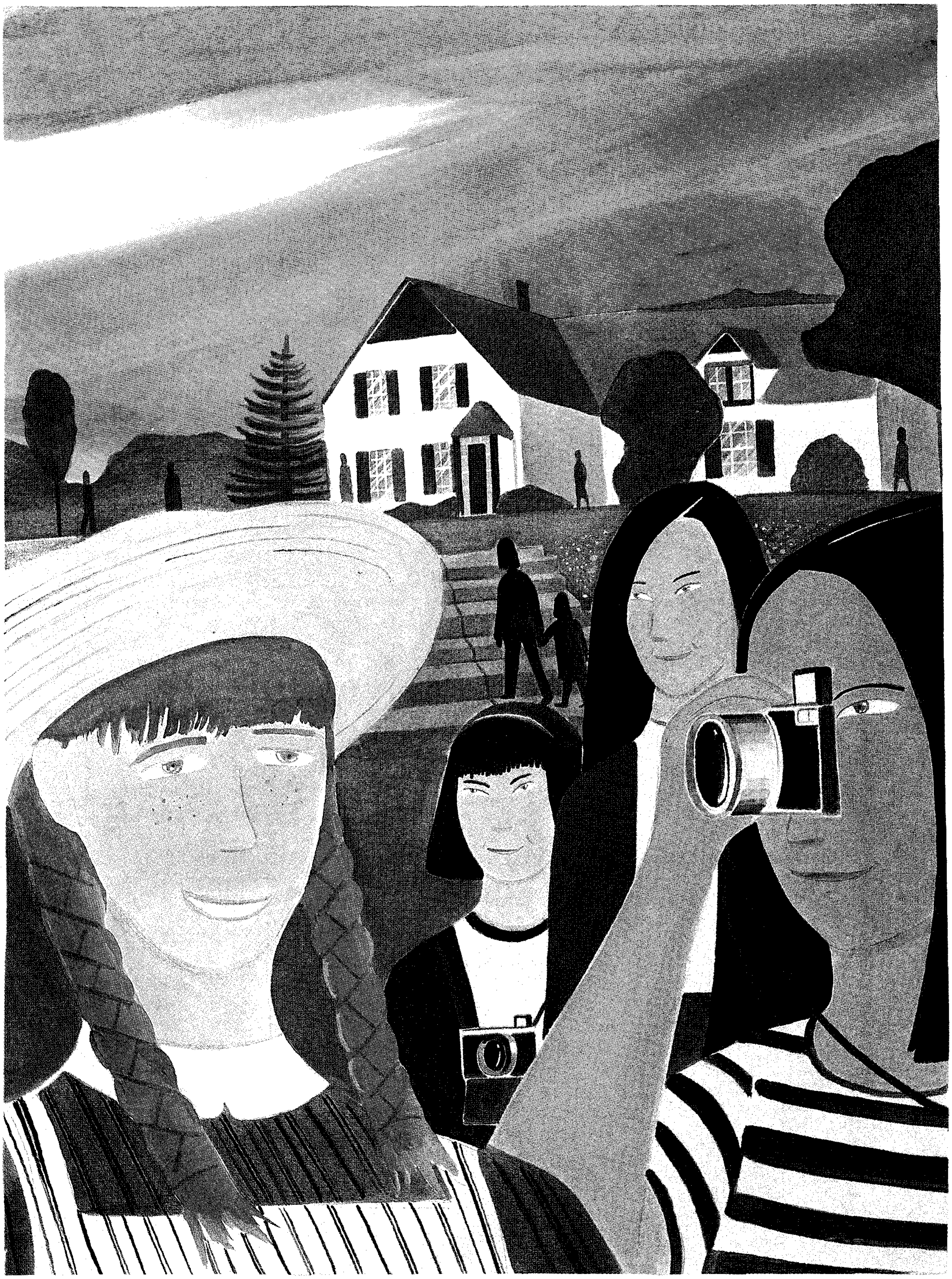
It's possible that an interest in Anne was less understandable to me partly because my exposure to "Anne of Green Gables" has been much less extensive than my exposure to, say, "Sabrina" or "Breakfast at Tiffany's." In the United States, the series of books that L. M. Montgomery wrote about Anne is popular mainly with girls of ten or twelve. I do have two daughters, both of whom read "Anne of Green Gables," the first and most popular of Montgomery's books, at the usual age. Because we happen to live in the Canadian Maritimes in the summer, we even took a trip to Prince Edward Island one August so that the girls could see the musical version of "Anne of Green Gables," which has been playing in Charlottetown in the summers since 1965. From that trip, I knew roughly what "Anne of Green Gables" is about: a brother and sister named Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert, both unmarried and both getting on in years, intend to adopt (if that's the word) an orphan boy from Nova Scotia to help with the chores on the family farm near Avonlea, and are sent instead a spunky, independent-minded, determined, romantic, imaginative girl named Anne Shirley. It doesn't take much more than superficial exposure to "Anne of Green Gables" to understand why it has been an enormously popular book from the time it was published, in 1908. I don't know if Anne is actually, as the cover of our paperback copy of "Anne of Green Gables" claims, "the most beloved, beguiling and timeless heroine in all of fiction," but she is a terrifically appealing character.

As an orphan girl in a family-oriented farming community, she is, of course, an underdog from the start. Like a lot of girls her age, she finds her looks disappointing—she's a skinny redhead who wears her hair in braids that her handsome classmate Gilbert Blythe refers to as "carrots"—but the reader knows better. Marilla—a high-minded but stern farm woman who thinks of herself as someone who has no time for frivolous nonsense—grows to love Anne despite being in an almost constant state of exasperation with her; Matthew, Marilla's shy brother, adores Anne almost from the moment he spots her at the train station, sitting forlornly on a pile of shingles. The plot of "Anne of Green Gables" consists largely of Anne's getting herself in scrapes that then have to be sorted out—getting her friend Diana drunk by mistaking currant wine for raspberry cordial, for instance, or talking back to a local busybody who calls her skinny and homely. ("How would you like to have such things said about you? How would you like to be told that you are fat and clumsy and probably hadn't a spark of imagination in you?")

Anne's independence and her curiosity and her outspokenness—what Marilla sums up as her "queer ways"—sometimes shock the conventional ladies of the Church Aid Society and Foreign Missions Auxiliary and often get her sent to her room. But it's clear that some sort of accommodation with Prince Edward Island ways is going to be worked out before anything frightening or dangerous happens. In the final accommodation, after Matthew dies and it becomes obvious that Marilla's sight is failing, Anne puts off her dreams of college to remain on the farm and care for Marilla. Anne sometimes displays a sort of innocent wisdom ("Saying one's prayers isn't exactly the same thing as praying"), and she always has a dramatic way of talking, whether she's being punished ("Please don't ask me to eat anything, especially boiled pork and greens. Boiled pork and greens are so unromantic when one is in affliction") or engaging in an act of derring-do ("I shall walk that ridgepole, Diana, or perish in the attempt. If I am killed you are to have my pearl bead ring"). Thinking about Anne's charm and insouciance, it occurred to me that she might have been played perfectly by a very young Audrey Hepburn.

When we took our family trip to P.E.I.—this was at the beginning of the eighties—Anne seemed to be an added attraction for touring families that had been drawn from eastern Canada and New England principally by the beaches and the pastoral landscape and the lobster suppers. If there were any Japanese Anne fans there, we didn't notice them. Around that time, though, Anne tourism

GEOFFREY PARKER



Anne "can do anything," I was told, "which is what we want to do."

"Admit it! You'd put me in a Winnebago if you could."

was getting a start in Japan. "Anne of Green Gables" had been popular with young Japanese readers since 1952, when a noted translator did a translation that carried the title still used for Anne in Japan—"Anne of Red Hair." The straitened circumstances that most Japanese found themselves in during the early fifties may have made it easier for them to identify with a penniless orphan, but those circumstances also put travel to exotic destinations beyond their dreams. Thirty years later, Japan seemed to be exporting even more tourists than automobiles or television sets. A Tokyo publisher, alerted by the reader-comment cards that are customarily included in Japanese books, organized a tour of Prince Edward Island for people who longed to see the places described by L. M. Montgomery.

From what I could gather, the arrival of Japanese tourists took just about everyone on Prince Edward Island by surprise. P.E.I. people would presumably have taken it for granted that Anne was popular in Japan—Anne is popular in Poland; she's popular in Taiwan—but nobody on the island could imagine that Japanese Anne fans would fly to Toronto or Vancouver and then to Halifax and then to Charlottetown in order to inspect the presumed setting of what was, after all, a work of fiction. Around the time our family went to P.E.I., a well-dressed Japanese gentleman came to the old house, in the Park Corner section of the island, that is now called the Anne of Green Gables Museum at Silver Bush. It's a house whose strongest connection to Lucy Maud Montgomery is that it was the scene of her wedding, but, like the other Anne sites, it also features a sort of blurb from the author on how much the place meant to her ("The wonder castle of my childhood"). The proprietor—a collateral descendant of L. M. Montgomery named George Campbell, who grew up in the house—assumed that the visitor was a businessman who happened to be on the island to buy tuna and had found himself with a spare hour or two. Not at all. The man said that he had come from Japan to see the Anne sites. Campbell found that cheering news, and he was cheered even more when, a couple of years later, the first Japanese tourists in an organized group showed up at Silver Bush. They cleaned out his souvenir shop.

The Japanese visitors did not include many businessmen or many families with ten-year-old girls. They were (and still are) mainly single women in their late teens and twenties who are doing office work for a few years before they marry and begin a family—women who are sometimes referred to in Japan as Young Office Ladies. The Japanese still represent only a tiny percentage of the tourists who come to Prince Edward Island every year. From what I could see on a return visit to P.E.I. this summer, though, they often seem to be in the majority at the places important to Anne fans—the green-gabled house of Lucy Maud Montgomery's cousins, which gave the first novel its title, the tiny house where the author was born, the Park Corner house where she was married, her paternal grandfather's house, the foundation and gardens of the house where she was reared. In tourist promotion, I was told by a provincial tourist official while I was on the island, P.E.I. markets relaxation to Ontario, beaches and scenery and seafood to Quebec, and history and culture to New England. To Japan, it markets Anne.

Guestbooks at the Anne sites are full of Japanese script. Japanese appears on signs and in restaurant advertisements. The Prince Edward, in Charlottetown, which is the largest hotel on the island, now has six Japanese-speaking employees and, with advance notice, can provide such amenities as lobster sashimi or a special Anne dinner, which features a Japanese-language video of P.E.I. scenery and what is described as "enjoyable time with 'ANNE.' " One of the two tour companies that offer Anne wedding packages sold forty-three last season and nearly seventy this season.

In Japan, Anne remains the heroine of books and television shows and books from the television shows and cartoons from the books and comic books from the cartoons. Apparently, Japanese who are oblivious of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, say, or ice hockey identify Anne with Canada. In an article in 1993 for the *Journal of Canadian Studies* on Anne's Japanese connection, a historian named Douglas Baldwin included a couple of stunning statistics. One was that out of a hundred and fifty young Japanese women interviewed for guide positions in the Canadian pavilion at the 1970 World's Fair, near Osaka, a hundred and forty-nine were familiar with Anne of Green Gables. Another was that a survey taken by a Japanese travel magazine in 1992 listed the places its readers most wanted to visit as New York, Paris, London, and Prince Edward Island. In

Japan, the Anne image—usually depicted simply by red braids and Anne's characteristic straw bonnet—is considered so powerful that it has been used as the logo and principal attraction for a sort of theme park in Hokkaido whose name does not strike an American as one that would cause intense excitement among potential fun-lovers: Canadian World.

NORMALLY, I think, exploiting an author as a tourist attraction presents a problem that also crops up in writing an author's biography: What's to see? The labor that makes a world-famous novelist worth writing about was almost certainly done while he was sitting all by himself in a quiet room. The raw material was probably invisible to everyone but him. A visitor to Herman Melville's study couldn't expect to find any whales. What exactly would the tourist-development director of Samuel Beckett's home town display? Prince Edward Island does have some advantages in making a tourist attraction of what Lucy Maud Montgomery created in her books about Anne, almost all of which were set in Avonlea, a fictionalized version of Cavendish, P.E.I. Only a few years after "Anne of Green Gables" was published, L. M. Montgomery married a Presbyterian minister and moved to Ontario, where she lived for the rest of her life. But even her later books are so imbued with the look and feel of Prince Edward Island that the province itself practically qualifies as one of the characters. Also, apart from Charlottetown and some commercial development near Cavendish that amounts to Anne-sprawl, most of P.E.I. looks remarkably like the picturesque farmland that was described by L. M. Montgomery in the first decades of the century. P.E.I. is still mainly agricultural—it is a speck of an island that produces a significant percentage of the potatoes grown in the second-largest country in the world—and a lot of its farmers still seem to live in the houses their parents and grandparents and great-grandparents lived in. The houses visited by Anne fans look pretty much the way they did when Lucy Maud Montgomery was visiting them, and they also look like the houses down the road. All this may make it somewhat less likely that somebody who is shown "Matthew's room" at one of the Anne sites will respond by saying, "Matthew was imaginary. He didn't have a room."

Also, Lucy Maud Montgomery's early life was so close to Anne's that the real haunts of her childhood are easy to accept as the settings of the novels. Maud, as she was called on P.E.I., was virtually an orphan herself: from the age of two, when her mother died and her father moved west, she was reared by her maternal grandparents—severe and occasionally difficult people, by all accounts, who had little interest in children. Like Anne, she later sacrificed her own ambitions to care for the person who had cared for her: returning from Halifax, where she had started working for a newspaper, she spent thirteen years caring for her aged grandmother. Like Anne in the later books, she taught school for a while. " 'Is Anne a real person?' was a question often asked of L. M. Montgomery," Professor Elizabeth Waterston writes in "Kindling Spirit: L. M. Montgomery's 'Anne of Green Gables,' " a volume that is part of a series on important works of Canadian literature. "In her Journal she gives a tantalizing answer: 'I always answer "no" with an odd reluctance and an uncomfortable feeling of not telling the truth.' . . . Anne seemed to have her own existence: 'If I turned my head quickly should I not see her?' "

The fact that Lucy Maud Montgomery is sometimes difficult to distinguish from her heroine adds to the commingling of fiction and reality which is part of celebrating Anne on Prince Edward Island, so that being married in the parlor where Maud was married almost seems to put a couple into the book. One of the first people I talked to on my latest visit to Prince Edward Island was George Campbell, who has found himself in the business of staging weddings for Japanese couples—most of whom are there without family or friends and many of whom use the "free day" of a three-day group tour of the island to tie the knot. Since Campbell didn't happen to have any weddings scheduled during my visit, I asked him exactly how the ceremony worked. Our conversation went roughly like this:

"So who's in the parlor—the bride and the groom?"

"Well, the groom. The bride is going to come down the stairs, on the arm of her father."

"I thought you said that the bride and the groom usually didn't have any family with them."

"The driver plays the father. The one who drove them out from Charlottetown."

"And there's a minister?"

"Yes, a regular United Church of Canada minister."

"But is that legal in Japan?"

"Oh, they're married before they

"Remember when people had only themselves to blame?"

come. This is just for the ceremony."

"And who else is in the parlor?"

"Well, the organist. My wife. She plays 'The Voice That Breathed o'er Eden'—the same song that was played at Lucy Maud Montgomery's wedding. Also, there's sometimes a soloist to sing the song."

"And you're there."

"No, I'm not there. I'm outside with the horse."

"What horse? You didn't say anything about a horse."

"After Lucy Maud was married, my grandfather drove her and her husband to the station. So we have a horse and buggy, and the bride and the groom drive around the Lake of Shining Waters and have their picture taken."

"You do the driving?"

"Unless it's a de-luxe wedding. Then they get Matthew to drive them. I just hold the horse's head and help them into the buggy."

"And then they have a sort of reception in the tearoom?"

"Right."

"Biscuits and things?"

"Right. Except if it's a de-luxe. Then they have a cake that's precisely the sort of cake Lucy Maud had. Also, if it's a de-luxe Anne comes to the reception. Someone playing Anne, of course."

But why? Douglas Baldwin, in his article on the Anne phenomenon in Japan, lists any number of theories propounded by experts on Japanese culture to explain Anne's appeal: the Japanese devotion to innocence, their traditional love of nature, the admiration that people in a repressed society have for someone who can be frank and spontaneous, the Japanese sympathy for a poor protagonist who triumphs over long odds. (Several people I mentioned Anne to in Japan said that both Anne and the rags-to-riches heroine of an astonishingly popular Japanese soap opera called "Oshin" have a much admired characteristic known as *gambaru*, which means pluck or perseverance.) Baldwin adds some theories of his own. Despite the decades and air miles separating the two settings, he believes that "in many ways, the Japan of 1993 is similar to Prince Edward Island in 1900," and that "the 'Anne' novels are a subtle condemnation of the restrictive nature of Avonlea society, where convention and custom rule everyone's conduct."

THE RAG RUG

Somebody had made one. You admired it.
So you began to make your rag rug.
You needed to do it. Played on by lightnings
You needed an earth. Maybe. Or needed
To pull something out of yourself—
Some tapeworm of the psyche. I was simply
Happy to watch your scissors being fearless
As you sliced your old wool dresses,
Your castoffs, once so costly,
Into bandages. Dark venous blood,
Daffodil yellow. You plaited them
Into a rope. You massaged them
Into the new life of a motley viper
That writhed out of the grave
Of your wardrobe. Like the buried wrapping
Of old mummy non-selves. You bowed
Like a potter
Over the turning hub of your rich rag rug
That widened its wheel,
Searching out the perimeter of a music—
The tongues of the loose ends flickering in air,
Issuing like a fugue out of the whorls
Of your fingertips. It calmed you
Creating the serpent that coiled
Into a carpet. And the carpet
Lifted us, as it turned and returned,
Out of that crimson room of our cardiac days.
It freed me. It freed you
To do something that seemed almost nothing.
Whenever you worked at your carpet I felt happy.
Then I could read Conrad's novels to you.
I could cradle your freed mind in my voice,
Chapter by chapter, sentence by sentence,
Word by word: "Heart of Darkness,"
"The Secret Sharer." The same, I could feel
Your fingers caressing my reading, hour after hour,
Fitting together the serpent's jumbled rainbow.
I was like the snake charmer—my voice
Swaying you over your heaped coils. While you
Unearthed something deeper than our verses.
A knowledge like the halves of a broken magnet.

I remember
Those long, crimson-shadowed evenings of ours
More like the breath-held camera moments
Of reaching to touch a falcon that does not fly off.
As if I held your hand to stroke a falcon

In talking to Japanese people about "Anne of Green Gables," I did find that what they mentioned as appealing was often something in short supply in modern Japan. The Japanese are known for their love of beautiful scenery, but most of them now live in cities—a string of crowded cities, which tends to strike a Western visitor as one unrelievedly ugly splotch of urban sprawl. When I asked a young Japanese woman who works in the P.E.I. tourist industry about Anne's appeal, she said, "I think it's the free spirit of Anne. In Japan, everything is so strict. You're not allowed to be different. Having a different personality is not re-

With your hand.
Later (not much later)
Your diary confided to whomever
What furies you bled into that rug.
As if you had dug and dragged it, like your own entrails,
Out through your navel.

Was I the child or the mother? Did you braid it,
That umbilicus between us,
To free yourself from my contraction or was it
Pushing me out and away? Did you coil it,
Your emergency magic operation,
To draw off the tangle of numb distance
Secreting itself between us? Or was it
A drooled curse
From some old bitter woman's rusty mouth
That stays awake when she sleeps—her malediction
Spellbinding tiered labyrinths of confusion
Into the breadth of a hearth rug? The coils,
Impassable, became a mamba, fatal.
Its gentle tap, when you trod on it for finality,
Would alter your blood. When I stepped over it
Would alter my nerves and brain.
I dreamed of our house
Before we ever found it. A great snake
Lifted its head from a well in the middle of the house
Exactly where the well is, beneath its slab,
In the middle of the house.
A golden serpent, thick as a child's body,
Eased from the opened well. And poured out
Through the back door, a length that seemed unending—
Till its tail tapered over the threshold,
The deep-worn, cracked threshold, soon to be ours.
That was after the whole house, in my dream,
Had capsized. And a perfect replica
Double of the house—the well-world's own
Upside-down reflection duplicate—
Had swung uppermost, and locked upright
Under its different stars, with an earthquake jolt,
Shaking the snake awake.
The rag rug
That had heaped out onto your lap
Slid to the floor. There it lay, coiled
Between us. However it came,
And wherever it found its tongue, its fang, its meaning,
It survived our Eden.

—TED HUGHES

spected." It is, of course, particularly difficult for a woman in Japan to have a different personality. My business in Japan brought me into contact with a number of Japanese women, many of them highly accomplished in their fields, and they tended to have had mixed success in liberating themselves from the traditional female role of being deferential or cute, or both.

You might conclude that Japanese women see Anne as a sort of idealization of what they'd like to be if they could. "Anne is just a wonderful person for us Japanese because women feel trapped," I was told in Japan by Kiyomi Matsufuji, who has been involved with Anne and P.E.I. for years. "She can do anything, which is what we want to do." That view, I suspect, would be considered romantic by Clare Fawcett, an anthropologist who speaks Japanese and runs the summer English-language school sponsored by the L. M. Montgomery Institute, at the University of Prince Edward Island. After interviews with a number of students at the language school, which so far is all female and all Japanese, she concluded that "Montgomery's characters and plots reconfirm rather than question traditional definitions of the role of Japanese society." The Japanese women who had come to the English-language school, she discovered, "could not imagine themselves having or developing the characteristics which distinguish Anne from the image of the ideal Japanese women," such as her feistiness and her willingness to speak her mind. Instead, they identified with Anne as a cheerful and loyal member of her family—someone who was willing to give up her opportunity to go to college because Marilla needed her, someone who always comes around in the end. In the later books, Fawcett points out, "Anne grows up and shuts up just as Japanese women retire to the kitchen."

To people in the tourist trade, why Anne is a marketable commodity in Japan is less important than, say, whether she might also be a marketable commodity in Korea, where interest in the stories is apparently widespread but somewhat less intense. When I asked Les Miller, who works in tourism marketing for Prince Edward Island, what he thought Anne's appeal was for the Japanese, he listed a few possibilities—the fact that "Anne of Green Gables" was for a while part of the school curriculum, for instance, and the fact that there were a lot of orphans in Japan when this story of a perky orphan was translated. Then he mentioned Anne clubs in Japan, whose most enthusiastic members tend to be women old enough to have children of their own, or even grandchildren. He said that the feeling the Japanese have for Anne is of a different order from the feeling that my daughters had when they were ten or twelve. "I've seen people get off the bus at Green Gables and cry," he said. He paused, and shook his head. Then he said, "We don't fully understand this phenomenon." ♦

FICTION

THE REVIVAL

Did she lead him on? Was she in love with him, even if only a little?

BY JULIAN BARNES

1. PETERSBURG

It was an old play of his, written in France back in 1849. The censor had banned it the following year, and licensed it for publication only in 1855. It finally reached the stage seventeen years later, when it ran for a pitiful five nights in Moscow. Now, thirty years after its conception, she had telegraphed asking permission to abridge it for Petersburg. He agreed, while gently protesting that this juvenile invention had been meant for the page, not the stage. He added that the play was unworthy of her talent. This was a typical gallantry; he had never seen her act.

Like most of his life's writing, the play was concerned with love. And, as in his life, so in his writing: love did not work. Love might or might not provoke kindness, gratify vanity, and clear the skin, but it did not lead to happiness; there was always an inequality of feeling or intention present. Such was love's nature. Of course, it "worked" in the sense that it caused life's profoundest emotions, made him fresh as spring's linden blossom, and broke him like a traitor on the wheel. It stirred him from well-mannered timidity to relative boldness—though a rather theoretical boldness, one tragicomically incapable of action. It taught him the gulping folly of anticipation, the wretchedness of failure, the whine of regret, and the silly fondness of remembrance. He knew love well. He also knew himself well. Thirty years earlier, he had written himself into the part of Rakitin, who offers the audience his conclusions about love: "In my opinion, Alexei Nikolaevich, every love, happy as well as unhappy, is a real disaster when you give yourself over to it entirely." These views were deleted by the censor.

He had assumed that she would play the female lead, Natalya Petrovna, the married woman who falls in love with her son's tutor. Instead, she chose to be Natalya's ward, Verochka, who, in the way of plays, also falls in love with the tutor. The production opened; he came to Petersburg; she called on him in his rooms at the Hotel de l'Europe. She had expected to be intimidated, but found herself charmed by the "elegant and likable grandpa" that she discovered. He treated her like a child. Was this so surprising? She was twenty-five, he was sixty.

On March 27th, he went to a performance of his play. Despite hiding in the depths of the director's box, he was recognized, and at the end of the second act the audience started calling his name. She came to take him onstage, but he refused, and took his bow from the box. After the third act, he visited her dressing room, where he grasped her hands and led her to the gaslight. "Verochka," he said. "Have I really written this Verochka? I didn't even pay attention to her when I was writing. . . . The focal point of the play is Natalya Petrovna. . . . Your Verochka is alive."

2. THE REAL JOURNEY

So did he fall in love with his own creation? Verochka onstage beneath the floodlight, Verochka offstage beneath the gaslight—his Verochka, prized now the more for having been overlooked in his own text thirty years earlier? If love, as some assert, is a purely self-referring business, if the object of love is finally unimportant because what the lover values is the emotions aroused, then what more appropriate circularity than for a dramatist to fall in love with his own creation? Who needs the interference of the real person, the real *her* beneath the sunlight, the lamplight, the heartlight? Here is a photo of Verochka, dressed as if for the schoolroom: timid and appealing, with ardor in her eyes and an open palm denoting trust.

But, if this confusion occurred, she incited it. Years later, she wrote in her memoirs, "I did not *play* Verochka, I performed a sacred rite. . . . I felt quite distinctly that Verochka and I were the same person." So let us be forgiving if the Verochka who was so "alive" was what first moved him; what first moved her was perhaps something else that didn't exist—the author of the play, now himself long gone, thirty years away. And let's also remember that he knew this would be his last love. He was an old man now. He was applauded, wherever he went, as an institution, the representative of an era, someone whose work was done. Abroad, they hung gowns and ribbons on him. He was sixty, old by choice as well as by fact. A year or two earlier, he had written, "After the age of forty there is only one word to sum up the basis of life: 'renunciation.' " Now he was half as old again as that defining anniversary. He was sixty, she was twenty-five.

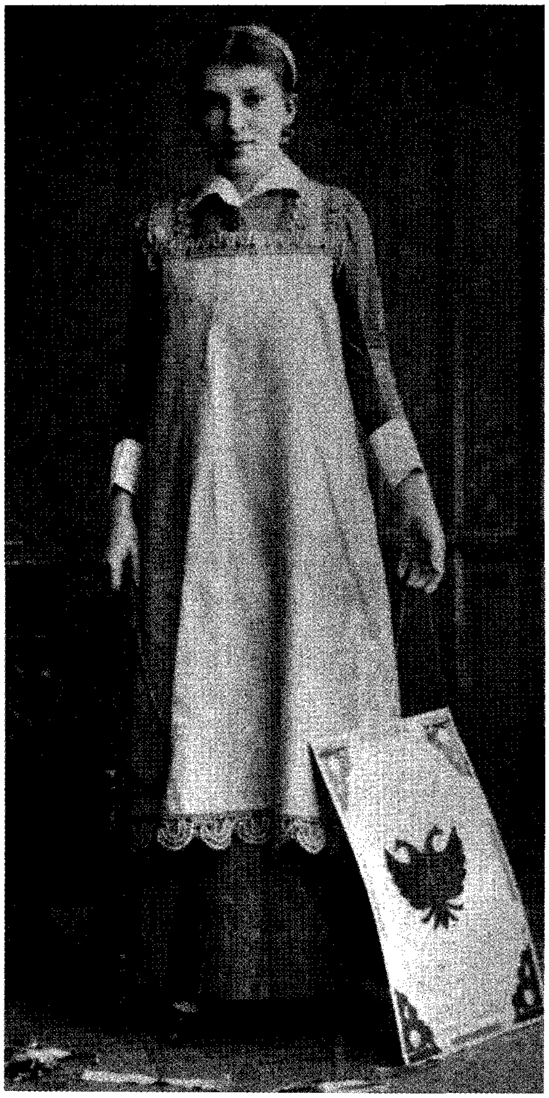
In letters, he kissed her hands, he kissed her feet. He sent a gold bracelet with their two names engraved inside. "I feel now," he wrote, "that I love you sincerely. I feel that you have become something in my life from which I shall never be parted." The phrasing is conventional. Were they lovers? It seems not. For him, it was a love predicated upon renunciation, whose excitements were called if-only and what-might-have-been. And just as, before the age of renunciation, physical vigor naturally appears as proof, or, at least, corroborating evidence, of professed emotion—the erection to the witness box!—so in the slower, later years the debility of the flesh confirms the heart's decline.

But all love needs a journey. All love symbolically is a journey, and that symbol needs bodying forth. *Their* journey took place on May 28, 1880. He was staying on his country estate; he pressed her to visit him there. She couldn't; she was an actress, at work, on tour; even she, at twenty-six, had things that must be renounced. But she would be travelling from Petersburg to Odessa; her route could take her through Mtsensk and Oryol. He consulted the timetable for her. Three trains left from Moscow along the Kursk line. The twelve-thirty, the four o'clock, and the eight-thirty: the express, the mail, and the slow train. Respective arrivals at Mtsensk: ten in the evening, four-thirty in the morning, and nine-forty-five in the morning. There was the practicality of romance to be considered. Should the beloved arrive with the post, or on the railway's equivalent of the red-eye? He urged her to take the twelve-thirty, redefining its arrival more exactly, to 9:55 P.M.

There is an ironic side to this precision. He was himself notoriously unpunctual. At one time he made an affectation of carrying a dozen watches on his person; even so, he would be hours late for a rendezvous. But on May 28th, trembling like a youth, he met the nine-fifty-five express at the little station of Mtsensk. Night had fallen. He boarded the train. It was thirty miles from Mtsensk to Oryol.

He sat in her compartment for those thirty miles. He gazed at her, he kissed her hands. He did not dare to kiss her lips: renunciation. Or he tried to kiss her lips and she turned her face away: shame, humiliation. The banality, too, at his age. Or he kissed her and she kissed him back as ardently: surprise, and leaping fear. We do not know; his diary was later burned, her letters have not survived. All we have are his subsequent letters, whose gauge of reliability is that they date this May journey to the month of June. We know that she had a travelling companion, Raisa Alexeyevna. What did she do? Feign sleep, pretend to have sudden night vision for the darkened landscape, retreat behind a volume of Tolstoy? Thirty miles passed. He got off the train at Oryol. She sat at her window, waving her handkerchief to him as the express took her on toward Odessa.

No, even that handkerchief is invented. But the point is, they had had their journey. Now it could be remembered, improved, turned into the embodiment, the actuality, of the if-only. He continued to invoke it until his death. It was, in a sense, his last journey, the last journey of the heart. “My life is behind me,” he wrote, “and that hour spent in the railway compartment, when I almost felt like a twenty-year-old youth, was the last burst of flame.”



“I kiss your little hands, your little feet, kiss everything you will allow me to kiss, and even that which you will not.”

NOVOSTI PRESS AGENCY

Does he mean he almost got an erection? Our century rebukes its predecessor for its platitudes and evasions, its sparks, its flames, its fires, its imprecise scorchings. Love isn't a bonfire, for God's sake—it's a hard cock and a wet cunt, we growl at these swooning, renouncing people. Get on with it! Why on earth didn't you? Cock-scared, cunt-bolted tribe of people! *Hand*-kissing! It's perfectly obvious what you really wanted to kiss. So why not? And on a train, too. You'd just have to hold your tongue in place and let the movement of the train do the work for you. Clackety-clack, clackety-clack!

When did you last have your hands kissed? And, if you did, how do you know he was any good at it? (Better, when did anyone last *write* to you about kissing your hand?) Here is the argument for the world of renunciation. If we know more about consummation, they knew more about desire. If we know more about numbers, they knew more about despair. If we know more about boasting, they knew more about memory. They had foot-kissing, we have toe-sucking. You still prefer our side of the equation? You may well be right. Then try a simpler formulation: If we know more about sex, they knew more about love.

Or perhaps this is quite wrong, and we mistake the gradations of courtly style for realism. Perhaps foot-kissing always meant toe-sucking. He also wrote to her, “I kiss your little hands, your little feet, kiss everything you will allow me to kiss, and even that which you will not.” Isn't this clear enough, to both writer and recipient? And, if so, then perhaps the converse is also true: that heart-reading was just as coarsely practiced then as it is now.

But, as we mock these genteel fumblers of a previous era, we should prepare ourselves for the jeers of the next century. How come we never think of this? We believe in evolution, but only in the sense of evolution culminating in us. We forget that this entails evolution beyond our solipsistic selves. Those old Russians were good at dreaming a better time, and we take their dreams as our applause. But we are the more complacent.

While her train continued toward Odessa, he spent the night at a hotel in Oryol. A bipolar night, splendid because he thought only of her, miserable because this prevented him from sleeping. The voluptuousness of renunciation was now upon him: “I find my lips murmuring, ‘What a night we should have spent together!’ ” To which our practical and irritated century replies, “Take another train then! Try

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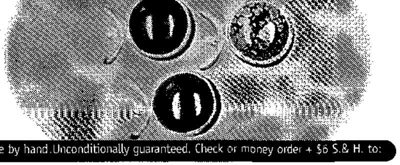

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kissing her wherever it was you didn't!"

Such action would be far too dangerous. He must preserve the impossibility of love. So he offers her an extravagant if-only. He confesses that as her train was about to leave he was suddenly tempted to the "madness" of abducting her. It was a temptation he naturally renounced: "The bell rang, and *ciao*, as the Italians say." But think of the newspaper headlines if he had carried out his momentary plan. "SCANDAL AT ORYOL RAILWAY STATION," he delightedly imagines. If only. "An extraordinary event took place here yesterday: the author T—, an elderly man, was accompanying the celebrated actress S—, who was travelling to Odessa for a brilliant season in the theatre there, when, just as the train was about to pull out, he, as though possessed by the Devil in person, extracted Mme. S— through the window of her compartment and, overcoming the artiste's desperate efforts, etc. etc." If only. The real moment—the possible handkerchief being waved at the window, the probable station gaslight falling on the whitened crest of an old man—is rewritten into farce and melodrama, into journalese and "madness." The alluring if-only does not refer to the future; it is safely lodged in the past. The bell rang, and *ciao*, as the Italians say.

He also had another tactic: that of hurrying on into the future in order to confirm the impossibility of love in the present. Already, and without "anything" having happened, he is looking back on this would-be something: "If we meet again in another two or three years, I shall be an old, old man. As for you, you will have entered definitively upon the normal course of your life and nothing will remain of our past. . . ." Two years, he thought, would turn an old man into an old, old one; while "normal" life is already waiting for her in the banal shape of an officer of hussars, clanking his spurs offstage and snorting like a horse. N. N. Vsevolozhsky. How useful the thunderous uniform was to the gauntly bent civilian.

We should not, by this stage, still be thinking of Verochka, the naïve, unfortunate ward. The actress who embodied her was robust, temperamental, bohemian. She was married, and already seeking a divorce; she would marry three times in all. Her letters have not survived. Did she lead him on? Was she a little in love with him? Was she, perhaps, more than a little in love with him, yet dismayed by his expectation of failure, his voluptuous renunciations? Did she, perhaps, feel just as trapped by his past as he did? If for him love had always meant defeat, why should it be any different with her? If you marry a foot fetishist, you should not be surprised to find him curled up in your shoe cupboard.

When he recalled that journey in letters to her, he made oblique references to the word "bolt." Was this the lock on the compartment, on her lips, on her heart? Or the lock on his flesh? "You know what the predicament of Tantalus was?" he wrote. The predicament of Tantalus was to be tortured in the infernal regions by endless thirst; he was up to his neck in water, but whenever he bent his head to drink the river would run away from him. Are we to conclude from this that he tried to kiss her, but that whenever he advanced she retreated, withdrawing her wet mouth?

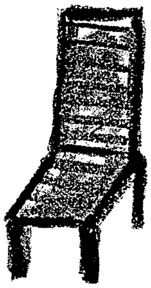
On the other hand, a year later, when everything is safe and stylized, he writes this: "You say, at the end of your letter, 'I kiss you warmly.' How? Do you mean as you did then, on that June night, in the railway compartment? If I live a hundred years I will never forget those kisses." May has become June, the timid suitor has become the recipient of myriad kisses, the bolt has been slid back a little. Is this the truth, or is that the truth? We, now, would like it to be neat then, but it is never neat: either the heart drags in sex or sex drags in the heart.

3. THE DREAM JOURNEY

He travelled. She travelled. But they did not travel; never again. She visited him at his estate, she swam in his pond—"the Undine of St. Petersburg"—and when she left he named the room in which she had slept after her. He kissed her hands, he kissed her feet. They met, they corresponded until his death, after which she protected his memory from vulgar interpretation. But thirty miles was all they travelled together.

They could have travelled. If only . . . if only. But he was a connoisseur of the if-only, and so they did travel. They travelled in the past conditional.

She married for the second time. N. N. Vsevolozhsky, officer of hussars, clank, clank. When she asked his opinion of her choice, he declined to play. "It is too late to ask for my opinion. *Le vin est tiré—il faut le boire.*" Was she asking him, artist to artist, for his view of the conventional marriage she was about to make to a man with whom she had little in common? Or was it more than this? Was she proposing her own if-only, asking him to sanction the jilting of her fiancé, or, at least, inviting him to muse on the possibility that she might?



But Grandpa, who himself had never married, declines either to sanction or to applaud. *Le vin est tiré—il faut le boire.* Does he have a habit of lapsing into foreign phrases at key emotional moments? Do French and Italian provide the suave euphemism that helps him evade?

Of course, if he had sanctioned a late withdrawal from her second marriage, that would have let in too much reality, let in the present tense. He closes it off: drink the wine. This instruction given, fantasy can resume. In his next letter, twenty days later, he writes, "For my part, I am dreaming about how good it would be to travel about—just the two of us—for at least a month, and in such a way that no one would know who or where we were."

It is a normal dream of escape. Alone together, anonymous, time on one's hands. It is also, of course, a honeymoon. And where would the sophisticated artistic class go for their honeymoon if not to Italy? "Just imagine the following picture," he teases. "Venice (perhaps in October, the best month in Italy) or Rome. Two foreigners in travelling clothes: one tall, clumsy, white-haired, long-legged, but very contented; the other a slender lady with remarkable dark eyes and black hair. Let us suppose her contented as well. They walk about the town, ride in gondolas. They visit galleries, churches, and so on; they dine together in the evening; they are at the theatre together—and then? There my imagination stops respectfully. Is it in order to conceal something, or because there is nothing to conceal?"

Did his imagination stop respectfully? Ours doesn't. It seems pretty plain to us in our subsequent century. A crumbling gentleman in a crumbling city on a surrogate honeymoon with a young actress. The gondoliers are splish-sploshing them back to their hotel after an intimate supper, the soundtrack is operetta, and we need to be told what happens next? We are not talking about reality, so the feebleness of elderly, alcohol-weakened flesh is not an issue; we are very safely in the conditional tense, with the travelling rug tucked round us. So . . . if only . . . if only . . . then you would have fucked her, wouldn't you? No denying it.

Elaborating the Venice-honeymoon fantasy while she is still between husbands has its dangers. Of course, you have again renounced her, so there is small risk that by exciting her imagination you might find her outside your front door one morning, perched on a travelling trunk and coyly fanning herself with her passport. No; the more real danger is of pain. Renunciation means the avoidance of love, and hence of pain, but even in this avoidance there are traps. There is pain to be had, for instance, in the comparison between the Venetian capriccio of your respectful imagination and the impending reality of her getting disrespectfully fucked on her actual honeymoon by an officer of hussars, N. N. Vsevolozhsky, who is as unfamiliar with the Accademia as he is with the unreliabilities of the flesh.

What heals pain? Time, the old wiseacres respond. You know better. You are wise enough to know that time does not always heal pain. Your image of the amatory bonfire, the eyeball-drying flame that dies to sad ashes, needs adjusting. Try instead the hissing gas jet that scorches, if you will, but also does worse: it gives light—jaundicing, flat-shadowed, and remorseless, the sort of light that catches an old man on a provincial platform as the train pulls out, a valetudinarian who watches a yellow window and a twitching hand

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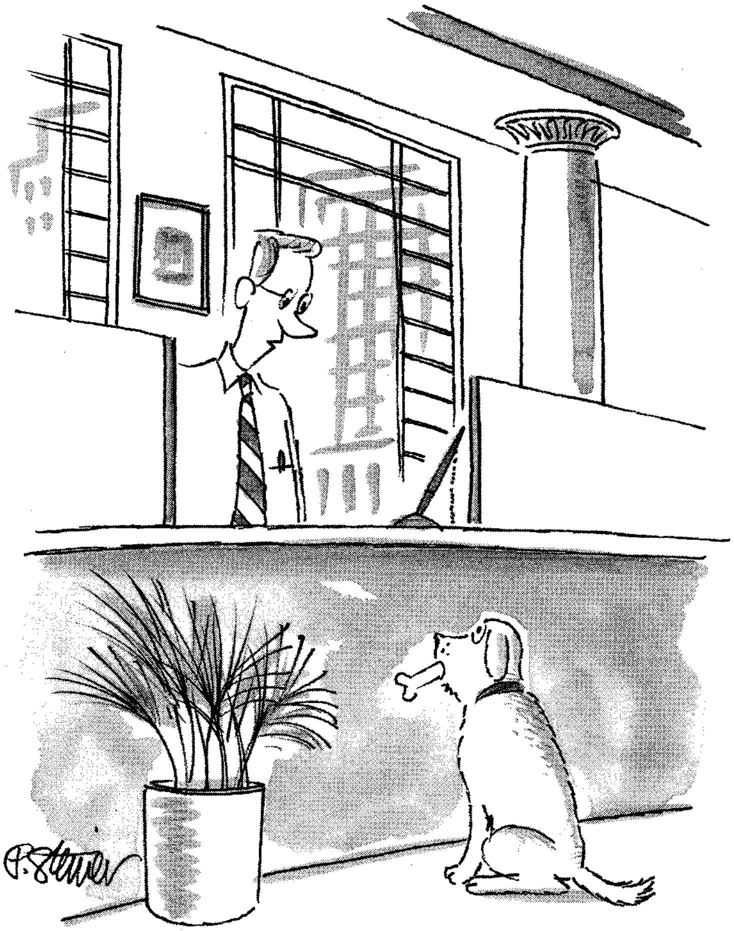
withdraw from his life, who walks after the train a few paces as it curves into invisibility, who fixes his eye upon the red lamp of the guard's wagon, holds on that until it is less than a ruby planet in the night sky, then turns away and finds himself still beneath a platform lamp, alone, with nothing to do except wait out the hours in a musty hotel pretending he has gained when truly he has lost, filling his sleeplessness with cozy if-onlys, and who then returns to the station and once more stands alone, in a kinder light but to make a crueller journey, back along those thirty miles he had travelled with her the previous night. The journey from Mtsensk to Oryol, which he will fetishize for the rest of his life, is always shadowed by that unrecorded return from Oryol to Mtsensk.

So he proposes a second dream journey, again to Italy. By now she is married, a change of status which is not an interesting subject for discussion. Drink the wine. She is going to Italy, perhaps with her husband, though travelling companions are not inquired after. He approves the journey, if only because it lets him offer her an alternative; not a rivalrous honeymoon this time but a trip safely in the painless past conditional. "I spent ten of the most delightful days in Florence, many, many years ago." This use of time anesthetizes pain. It was so many, many years ago that he was then "still under forty"—before the basis for life became renunciation. "Florence left on me the most fascinating and poetic impression—even though I was there alone. What it would have been like, had I been in the company of a woman who was understanding, good, and beautiful—that above all!"

This is safe. The fantasy is manageable, his gift a false memory. Later, in our century, the political leaders of his country would specialize in airbrushing people from history, removing their photographic traces. Now here he is, bent over his album of memories, meticulously inserting the figure of a previous companion. Paste it in, that photograph of the timid, appealing Verochka, while the lamplight rejuvenates your white hair into black shadow.



"The bank accepted bones in the eighties. We don't accept bones anymore."

4. AT YASNAYA POLYANA

SHORTLY after meeting her, he had gone to stay with Tolstoy, who took him out shooting. He was put in the best blind, over which snipe habitually passed. But that day for him the sky remained empty. Every so often, a shot would ring out from Tolstoy's blind; then another; then another. All the snipe were flying to Tolstoy's gun. It seemed typical. He himself shot a single bird, which the dogs failed to find.

Tolstoy despised him from the start; thought him ineffectual, vacillating, unmanly, a frivolous socializer and a despicable Westernizer; hugged him, loathed him, spent a week in Dijon with him, quarrelled with him, forgave him, valued him, visited him, challenged him to a duel, hugged him, despised him. This is how Tolstoy expressed sympathy when he lay dying in France: "The news of your illness has caused me much sorrow, especially when I was assured it was serious. I realized how much I cared for you. I felt that I should be much grieved if you were to die before me."

Tolstoy at this time would have despised his taste for renunciation. Later, Tolstoy himself became a renunciator, railing at the lusts of the flesh and seeking to hug a Christian peasant simplicity. It didn't work: he wasn't much good at it. Some might think him a fraud, a fake renunciator; but it was more that he lacked the skills. His flesh declined renunciation. Three decades later, he died at a railway station. His last words were not "The bell rang, and *ciao*, as the Italians say." Does the successful renunciator envy his unsuccessful counterpart? There are ex-smokers who decline the offered cigarette but say, "Blow the smoke in my direction."

She was travelling; she was working; she was married. He asked her to send him a plaster cast of her hand. He had kissed the real thing so many times; had kissed an imagined version of the real thing in almost every letter he wrote her. Now he could lay his lips on a plaster version. Is plaster nearer to flesh than air? Or did the plaster turn his love and her flesh into a memorial?

There is an irony in this request: normally it is the writer whose creative hand is cast in plaster; and normally by the time this is done he is dead.

So he proceeded deeper into old age, knowing that she was—had already been—his last love. And, since form was his business, did he at this time remember his first love? He was a specialist in the matter. Did he reflect that first love fixes a life forever? Either it impels you to repeat the same kind of love and fetishizes some of its components or else it is there as warning, trap, counterexample.

His own first love had taken place fifty years before. She had been a certain Princess Shakhovskaya. He was fourteen, she was in her twenties; he adored her, she treated him like a child. This puzzled him until the day he found out why. She was already his father's mistress.

The year after he shot snipe with Tolstoy, he visited Yasnaya Polyana again. It was Sonya Tolstoy's birthday, and the house was full of guests. He proposed that they should all recount the happiest moment of their lives. When his own turn in his own game arrived, he announced, with an exalted air and a familiar melancholy smile, that the happiest moment of his life was the moment of love, that instant when the eyes met. "This has happened to me once, perhaps twice." Tolstoy found this answer irritating.

Later, when the young people insisted upon dancing, he demonstrated what was new in Paris. He took off his jacket, stuck his thumbs in his armpits, and capered about, legs kicking, head waggling, white hair flopping, as the household clapped and cheered; he panted, capered, panted, capered, then fell over and collapsed into an armchair. It was a great success. Tolstoy wrote in his journal, "Turgenev—cancan. Sad."

"Once, perhaps twice." Was she the "perhaps twice"? Perhaps. In his penultimate letter, he kisses her hands. In his last letter, written in failing pencil, he does not offer kisses. He writes instead, "I do not change in my affections—and I shall keep exactly the same feeling for you until the end."

This end came six months later. The plaster cast of her hand is now in the Theatre Museum of St. Petersburg, the city where he had first kissed the original. ♦

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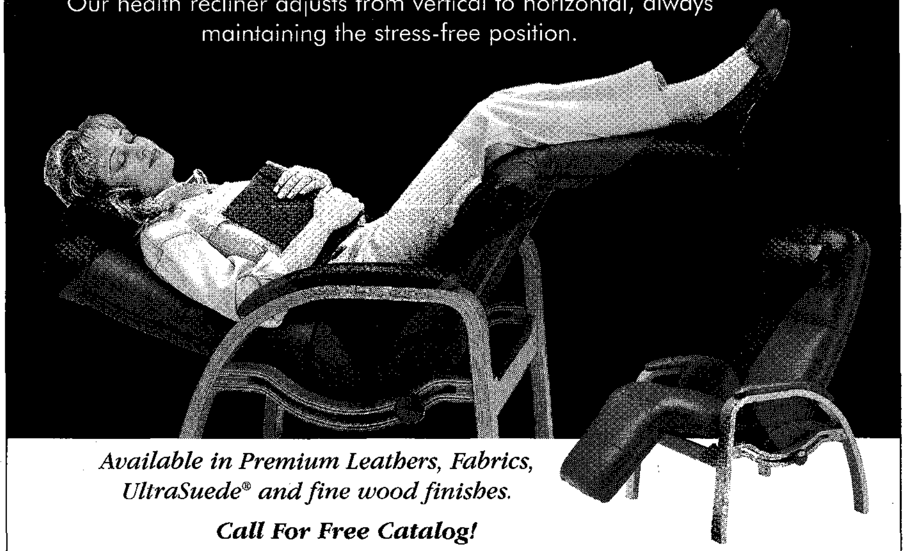

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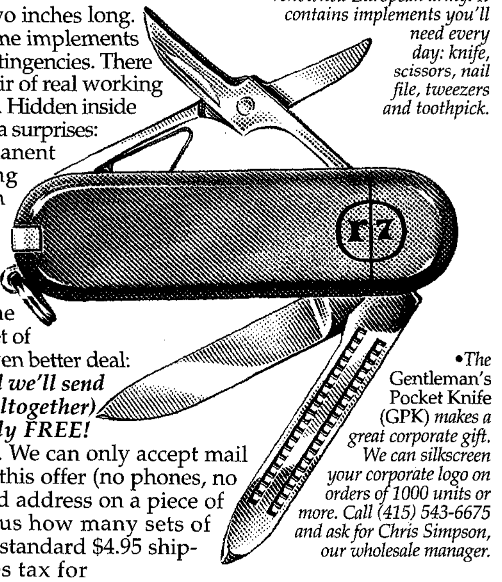


BOOKS

“U.S.A.” TODAY

Did John Dos Passos write the Great American Novel after all?

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

Not yet gone but long forgotten—such was John Dos Passos’s position in American letters during the last decade of his life. Since his death, in 1970, things haven’t changed for the better. Dos Passos’s work has passed from general neglect to near-complete obscurity. There was a time when, along with F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway, he was one of the big three of the American novel. For those of us who grew up on the fiction of the nineteen-twenties and thirties, Hemingway represented poetic sensitivity combined with a code of manliness, Fitzgerald style and worldly aspiration, and Dos Passos politics and social conscience.

Until the nineteen-forties, Dos Passos seems to have been as highly regarded as any American writer of his generation. Jean-Paul Sartre said of his fictional world that he knew of “none—not even Faulkner’s or Kafka’s—in which the art is greater or better hidden.” F. R. Leavis wrote of his “rare seriousness.” Lionel Trilling, in 1938, said that “U.S.A.,” the trilogy that is Dos Passos’s magnum opus, “stands as the important American novel of the decade.”

But today the small portion of literature from the past that gets remembered is that which gets taught. Dos Passos does not often get taught. Nor is there anything resembling a Dos Passos literary industry as there is a Hemingway or a Fitzgerald or a Faulkner industry, with its inevitable newsletters, its recurring collections of letters, and its bands of hot-handed academics mining ever thinner literary leavings. John Dos Passos is all but gone—poof!—down the history hole.

When I first read “U.S.A.,” in the summer of 1956, the eclipse of Dos Passos’s reputation was already well under way, though as an unbookish boy of nineteen I had no notion of this. Nor had I any notion that Dos Passos, by his actions and his subsequent publications, had largely disavowed much in this book that was to be his most impressive claim to lasting fame. I read its almost thirteen hundred pages nearly straight through, over three summer days, sitting outside the concrete tennis courts of Chicago’s Indian Boundary Park. Forty years later, I can still feel the cool shade of the park’s large Dutch-elm trees and hear the *pock, pock, pock* of tennis balls being struck in the background as I read on and deep into John Dos Passos’s book, until nothing in life outside that book interested me anywhere near as much as what was going on between its covers. “U.S.A.,” with its evocation of the tumult of American life in the first three decades of the century, blew me away. Dos Passos had the godlike aura of a novelist working on a vast stage with a huge cast of characters. As I read the cantering rhythms of his prose, my own mind galloped wildly off into fields until then unknown to me:

> And then they all woke up and for hours and hours the telephone poles went by, and towns, frame houses, brick factories with ranks and ranks of glittering windows, dumping grounds, trainyards, plowed land, pasture, and cows, and Milly got trainsick and Fainy’s legs felt like they would drop off from sitting in the seat so long; some places it was snowing and some places it was sunny, and Milly kept getting sick and smelt dismally of vomit and it got dark and they all slept; and light again, and then the towns and the frame houses and the factories all started drawing together, humping into warehouses and elevators, and the trainyards spread as far as you could see and it was Chicago.

Some books, if you come to them at just the right time, form you the way a crucial experience does. “U.S.A.” did that for me.

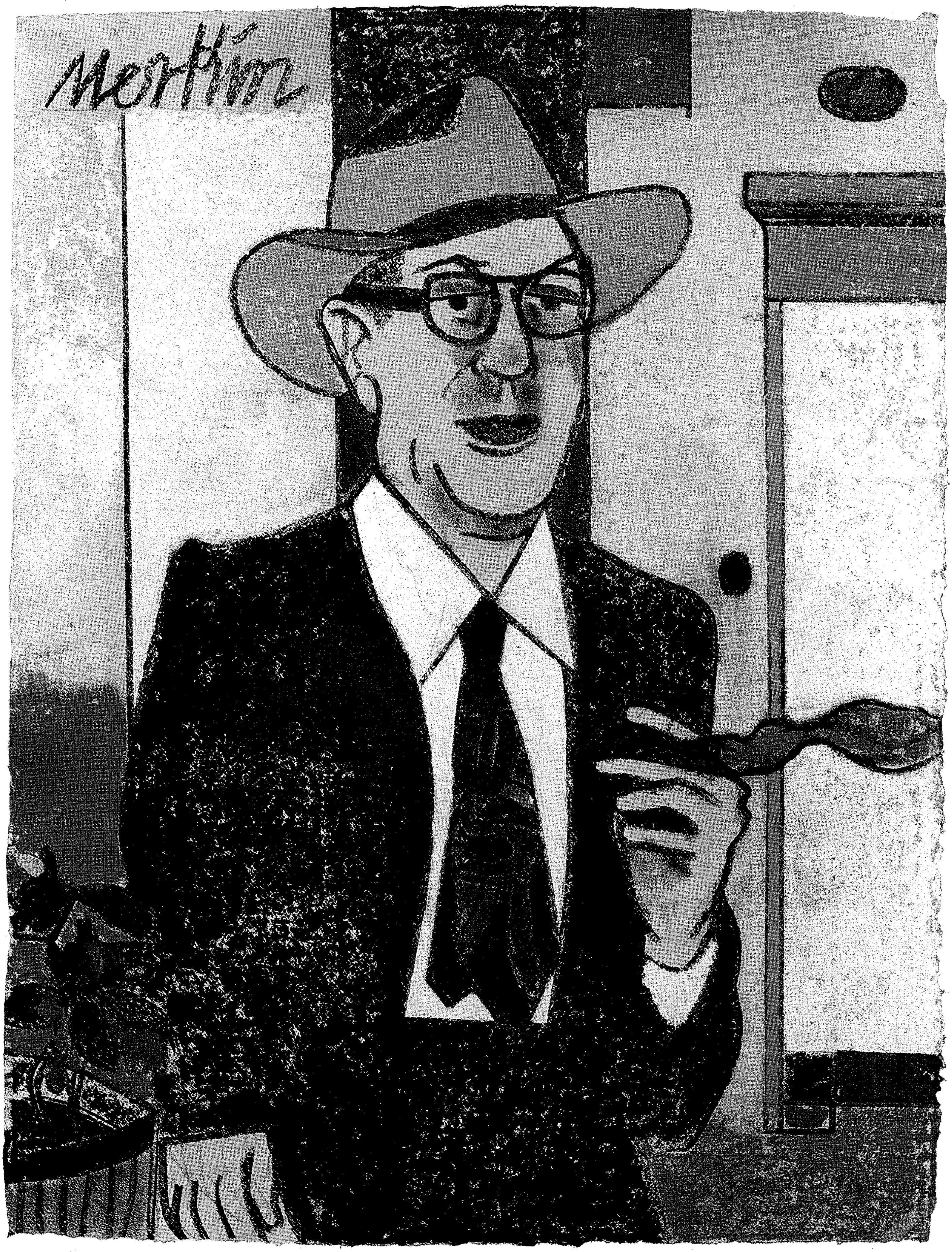
I had not then heard of the literary holy grail known as the Great American Novel, but that, of course, was precisely what Dos Passos seemed to me to have written: a vast, comprehensive work that attempted to reveal the soul of American life. Edmund Wilson, upbraiding Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Thornton Wilder for merely cultivating their “own little corners,” wrote, even before “U.S.A.” was completed, that Dos Passos “remains one of the few first-rate figures among our writers of his generation, and the only one of those who has made a systematic effort to study all the aspects of America and to take account of all its elements, to compose them into a picture which makes some general sense.”

To a boy of nineteen, it made more than general sense: what Dos Passos wrote seemed above argument. Fate, “U.S.A.” announced, was not in one’s own hands. Will, decency, aspiration—all were as nothing when they were set against the crushing force exerted by the current system of economics and social arrangements, which were the true determinants of personal destiny. I began “U.S.A.” as apolitical as a person can be and finished it a highly skeptical young man determined not to be plowed under by conformity, by empty ambition, by the false goddess of success. “You can’t argue with success,” my father used to say, with a shrug. But after reading Dos Passos I wished to do nothing else. At whose expense did the success come? At what cost? Success now stirred me only to dubiety, whereas I found failure rather noble. “U.S.A.,” in other words, gave me a politics and, with it, a ready-made position on nearly all the political and social issues I would encounter over the next fifteen or so years.

I myself became a writer—owing, at least in part, to my encounter with “U.S.A.”—and, having had articles and reviews published in *Harper’s*, *The New Republic*, *Dissent*, and other magazines, was ready to write my first book. What better subject than John Dos Passos, of whom no serious biography had yet been written? I wrote to Dos Passos, in Westmoreland County, Virginia, to ask for his coöperation. I soon received a reply, badly typed, in which Dos Passos said that he would be pleased to help me all he could, provided I put my “liberal ideology in mothballs” and promised never again to use the word “explicate.” He added that I mustn’t expect a great deal from him in the way of help, because he had work of his own that he wished to finish while he “still had a few marbles left.”

There was a jokey, generous spirit in

RICHARD MERKIN



In a way that is rare among modern writers, there was something gallantly upstanding and honorable about Dos Passos.

the letter, and I eagerly planned for our meeting. I signed a book contract, I read everything Dos Passos had published, I organized myself to write a full-blown biography of the six-to-eight-hundred-page sort that was then (and, alas, still is) in vogue. But less than a year later, in 1970, John Dos Passos died, at the age of seventy-four. With my subject no longer extant, I lost interest in writing his biography and soon thereafter returned the publisher's advance.

What I didn't lose interest in, however, was my notion of John Dos Passos as a model of the great novelist. Hemingway said that the first requisite for being a writer was an unhappy childhood, and here Dos Passos qualified handsomely. He was born in Chicago in 1896, to older parents—his mother was nearly forty-two and his father fifty-one at his birth—who were unable to wed, because his father, John Randolph Dos Passos, who was an immensely successful New York lawyer, was married to a woman who wouldn't release him from the marriage. (After her death, his parents finally married; John, Jr., was then fourteen.) The boy and his mother lived well, but not quite out in the open. His father was a worldly man, a yachtsman, and a lavish spender; he knew Thomas Edison and he once introduced his son to Mark Twain.

Dos Passos spent much of his childhood in hotels, both here and abroad, looking after his mother, who suffered from Bright's disease. He enrolled in schools under the name John Madison. They were very good schools, to be sure—the Sidwell Friends School, in Washington, D.C.; Peterborough Lodge, outside London; Choate; and then Harvard—but much of his early life, as it is described in the pages of his novels "Manhattan Transfer" (1925) and "Chosen Country" (1951), and in his memoir, "The Best Times" (1966), was strained and lonely. Shy, myopic, and unathletic, speaking with a mid-Atlantic accent, he was scarcely built for popularity, and it was only at Harvard, among the coterie of students who fancied themselves aesthetes, that he began to come into his own.

Dos Passos was of that generation of writers who cultivated experience, in contrast to earlier generations, who simply had it. The First World War was his generation's crucial experience: its members were opposed to the war but wouldn't have missed it for the world. Dos Passos first saw the war as a member of the volunteer Norton-Harjes Ambulance Corps, then served with the American Red Cross in Italy. Unpatriotic gore was his lot in both jobs: among other tasks, he carted out buckets of amputated arms and legs from surgical theatres. I say "unpatriotic" because by 1917 Dos Passos was thoroughly radicalized, and claimed that revolution was the only hope for a rotten and corrupt world. Never without humor, he signed letters to friends "Sans culottely, Dos."

BLACK HAIR

I remember her hair as black
Though I know it was brown.
Dark brown. I first saw it as black.
She was combing it. Probably it was wet.
She was combing it out after washing it.
Black, straight, shining hair down over her breasts.
That's the memory. I must have been sitting
On the kitchen table, looking down
Where she sat on the chest, at the fireside.
Bowing her head slightly toward me
She combed a center parting. And I thought
She's Red Indian
And that's why her nose is Red Indian.
And that's why her skin seems so dark.
My eyes are blue-green, but hers are dark.

So a big thought in my third or fourth year
Photographed her
Combing black, North American hair
That has outlasted her,
And that I would learn, as I began to learn better,
Was brown. Was gray.
Was fine as baby silk—every hair
Half the thickness in the micrometer
Of the next finest hair we measured
At school in metalwork.
So fine, I could hardly feel it
As I stroked it through those days she lay
Vanishing under my fingers.

—Ted Hughes

After his tours with Norton-Harjes and the Red Cross, Dos Passos joined the United States Army Medical Corps as a private. He put his First World War experience to literary use in two novels, "One Man's Initiation: 1917" (1920) and "Three Soldiers" (1921). "Three Soldiers" and "Manhattan Transfer" established his fame. Dos Passos was highly prolific, publishing his first essay, "Against American Literature," in *The New Republic*, a few months after he graduated from Harvard. His writing was as much a profession as an art, and he turned out not only novels but travel books, popular histories, poetry, plays, political tracts—some thirty books in all, of the most varied quality.

Though Dos Passos was never a member of the Communist Party, at times he seemed close to being a fellow-traveller. He was a familiar signatory to all the protests of the day, a member of the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, and voted for William Z. Foster, the Communist candidate for President, in the 1932 election. A symbolic moment occurred in his political odyssey when, in 1928, after he completed a tour of Soviet Russia, a Russian actress, who had come with him to the railroad station, called, "Are you for us or against us?" Dos Passos found himself unable to get his tongue around the phrase "For you" as the train pulled out of the station.

The exact nature of Dos Passos's politics has long been in dispute. The novelist Dawn Powell writes in her diaries about trying to explain to a graduate student that Dos Passos's leftism was in part legendary—"that Communist rallies were always advertising him when he wasn't even present, that he never led meetings, had a horror of organizations, etc." Powell, a tough judge of character, also comments on Dos Passos's kindness, calling him "one of the gentlest, sweetest, finest characters the world has known." Much evidence suggests that this is true. In a way that is rare among modern writers, there was something gallantly upstanding and honorable about him.

In 1937, Dos Passos, along with Lillian Hellman, Archibald MacLeish, and Ernest Hemingway, was part of a group that planned a propaganda film about the Spanish Civil War. He and Hemingway argued over the film: Hemingway wanted to emphasize the military aspect of the war, Dos Passos its sadness and suffering. A rupture came when an old friend of Dos Passos's, José Robles, was executed by the Communists on the charge that he was a Fascist spy. According to Dos Passos's biographer, Townsend Ludington, Dos Passos "believed that the Communists killed Robles for being unfriendly to their ulterior motives in the war," one of which was—as Orwell later confirmed in "Homage to Catalonia"—to discredit the so-called Trotskyists. Unwilling to hear anything disparaging about the Loyalist side, Hemingway told Dos Passos to cool his investigation into Robles's death. When Dos Passos told Hemingway that he was going to return to the United States to tell the truth about the Communists' role, Hemingway reportedly said to him, "You do that and the New York reviewers will kill you. They will demolish you forever." Dos Passos took no heed of the all too accurate warning.

The anti-Communism that Dos Passos absorbed from his experience in Spain evolved into a hostility to socialism and to the left generally. He had claimed to recognize class conflict in America, and to despise the inhuman quality of "our giant bureaucratic machines," but now America, once his great nemesis, became the world's great hope: liberty became his obsession, the name of his desire, and the theme of much of his fiction and other writing. All that encouraged individual liberty was good, all that stifled it—notably, big labor, big bureaucracy, big government—was detestable.

Dos Passos's transformed political views had a dire effect on his critical standing. He was seen as a sellout—a phrase that, it is useful to remember, got a strong workout among Stalinists, for whom any deviation from the line opened one to the charge that one had sold out the Communist Party. What Dos Passos was thought to have sold out, of course, was his passion against capitalism, his brilliant and unrelenting criticism of America, his belief in the cause of the underdog, his hope for revolution.

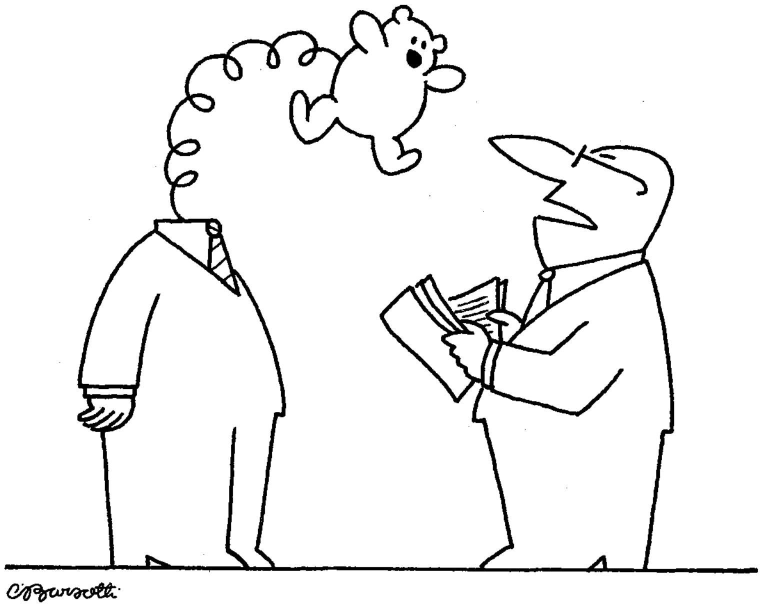
It was as true then as it is now that in the matter of politics writers can be more conformist than a Big Ten sorority during rush week. There's little doubt that Dos Passos's defection from literary leftism cost him his reputation. Hemingway had always gone out of his way to be insulting, once blasting him as "a one-eyed bastard" (Dos Passos lost an eye in a 1947 car accident, which also killed the first of his two wives); now he was joined even by Dos Passos's old friend Edmund Wilson. "In a time when the meaning of political slogans turns topsy-turvy every few years," Dos Passos wrote in "The Best Times," "anyone who tries to keep a questioning mind, matching each slogan with its real-life application, each label with the thing itself, has to put up with having old friends turn into unfriends and even into enemies."

Dos Passos now found himself in a very different crowd. I was in the audience at Madison Square Garden in 1962 when Dos Passos received an award from a right-wing organization called Young Americans for Freedom; groupie-like, I had gone there to gaze upon a culture hero of mine. Strom Thurmond, Ludwig von Mises, and John Wayne were also given awards that evening; L. Brent Bozell delivered a let-'er-rip speech about the betrayal of America. Dos Passos, by then in his late sixties, was a fairly thickset man, bald, bespectacled, dignified. This old friend of Gerald and Sara Murphy, it seemed to me that evening, had known jollier company.

Kenneth Lynn points out that the later Dos Passos's conservatism was not nearly as dogmatic as the earlier radicalism of "U.S.A." An air less of anger than of disappointment enters such novels as "Chosen Country," "Midcentury," and "Century's Ebb." In "U.S.A.," there is a clear line of demarcation between good and evil. "All right we are two nations," Dos Passos concludes near the close of his trilogy. In the books that follow, there is a sense of hangover, of mistakes made, of a world too complicated to be easily redeemed by revolution or other quick solutions. Yet these books, though they may have been written out of a greater maturity, attained nothing resembling the vitality of "U.S.A."

What happened? In his trilogy, Dos Passos's energies were divided between his hatred for those he deemed the enemy and his sympathy for victims, whereas his later novels are concerned chiefly with liberal dupes and swindlers, and happy capitalists. The outlines are bolder and the shading is less: the politician has wrested control from the novelist. You wish that Dos Passos could have written in a plague-on-both-their-houses spirit, but such equipoise seems not to have been available to him.

The test case here is Senator Joseph McCarthy, and, sadly, Dos Passos fails it. In "Century's Ebb" he wrote a brief biography of McCarthy which made him a pa-



"Damn, Tyler, I thought you'd worked through all that in therapy."

triotic martyr: "Plain oldfashioned patriotism had sent him out to risk his life with the Marines. Plain oldfashioned patriotism had a lot to do with his taking up the anti-Communist cause." It was, of course, possible to be strongly anti-Communist and still have a cold contempt for McCarthy and his shabby operation. But Dos Passos chose to write about McCarthy as a martyr to the cause rather than as what he more likely was, another politician-hustler on to what looked like a good thing.

MARKING the centenary of Dos Passos's death, the Library of America has now reissued "U.S.A."—the trilogy consisting of "The Forty-second Parallel" (which first appeared in 1930), "Nineteen Nineteen" (1932), and "The Big Money" (1936). After a hiatus of forty years, I have just reread it, and the ambition of Dos Passos in this trilogy seems even more impressive than I remembered. The plan of "U.S.A." is panoramic: its aim is to show almost the whole picture of American life in the first three decades of this century, a carefully significant bit at a time. The three novels are composed of four distinct parts: "newsreels," in which headlines and newspaper stories, advertisements, and snatches of contemporary popular songs are placed in sometimes comic, often ironic juxtaposition; "camera eyes" (fifty-one of these), in which Dos Passos offers, in stream-of-consciousness prose, autobiographical recollections of a period he is writing about elsewhere in the novel; biographies (twenty-six of these) of great or emblematic figures of the time, such as Joe Hill, Henry Ford, Rudolph Valentino, J. P. Morgan, Thorstein Veblen, and Isadora Duncan, all of them done in Whitmanesque style, and many of them still brilliant, even after so many years; and, finally, narratives of the lives of twelve major characters, and half a dozen important secondary ones, whose experience ranges from setting type for the International Workers of the World through selling the peace at Versailles for Woodrow Wilson by means of public relations to a successful career in silent movies.

"U.S.A.," its present-day readers may not realize, was an avant-garde work, in which Dos Passos applied modernist means to naturalist ends. The result is something like a multimedia event within a single book. Dos Passos had devised, through a montagelike method, an impressive apparatus for delineating collective historical experience. The collectivity was his unit of choice. His book is about the defeat of human aspiration by means of dehumanizing political and social and economic arrangements. "When you're outa luck in this man's country, you certainly are outa luck," one character says. All but the very rich live in perpetual peril of going under: "Everything would have gone right if his father hadn't slipped on the ice on the station steps one January morning Johnny's sophomore year and broken his hip."

Joseph Conrad once called Henry James the "historian of fine consciences." Dos Passos was the historian of coarse consciences. His characters act and react, and, above all, they aspire, often in a dreamy way, to wealth and love and what they construe to be the good life—but they do not quite think. Dos Passos draws them with impressive specificity, but they remain types instead of becoming individuated characters. In fiction, characters can develop into types, but the reverse rarely works: types never quite become successful characters. Characters as exquisitely and inexhaustibly thought-filled as Henry James's may never have existed in reality, and characters as generally thoughtless as Dos Passos's in "U.S.A." may be all around us, but, such are the mysteries of art, James's characters stick in the mind and Dos Passos's do not.

The problem, one feels, is that Dos Passos, whether he wrote as a man of the left or of the right, was primarily interested in the opportunity the novel offered to make political points—to engage in what he once called "my own curious sort of political agit-prop." Dos Passos was using his characters as intellectual constructs; they remain all too true to type, and that is death for fiction. He had an odd coldness—an objectivity that never let him be more than a puppet master to his characters. Theodore Dreiser, a less proficient writer, was able, because he could express through his characters his own deep stirrings, yearnings, heartbreak, and hope, to create George Hurstwood, Clyde Griffiths, and other characters who have joined the cast of American literature in a way that none of Dos Passos's characters have.

I see now, as I did not forty years ago, that Dos Passos's design in "U.S.A." was both grand and limited, with the limitation implicit in the grandeur. Use a wide-angle lens and you cannot expect to go very deep; use the closeup and you lose breadth of detail. It has been given to very few novelists—Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoy, and, at moments, Stendhal—to do both things well. Dos Passos was not among them.

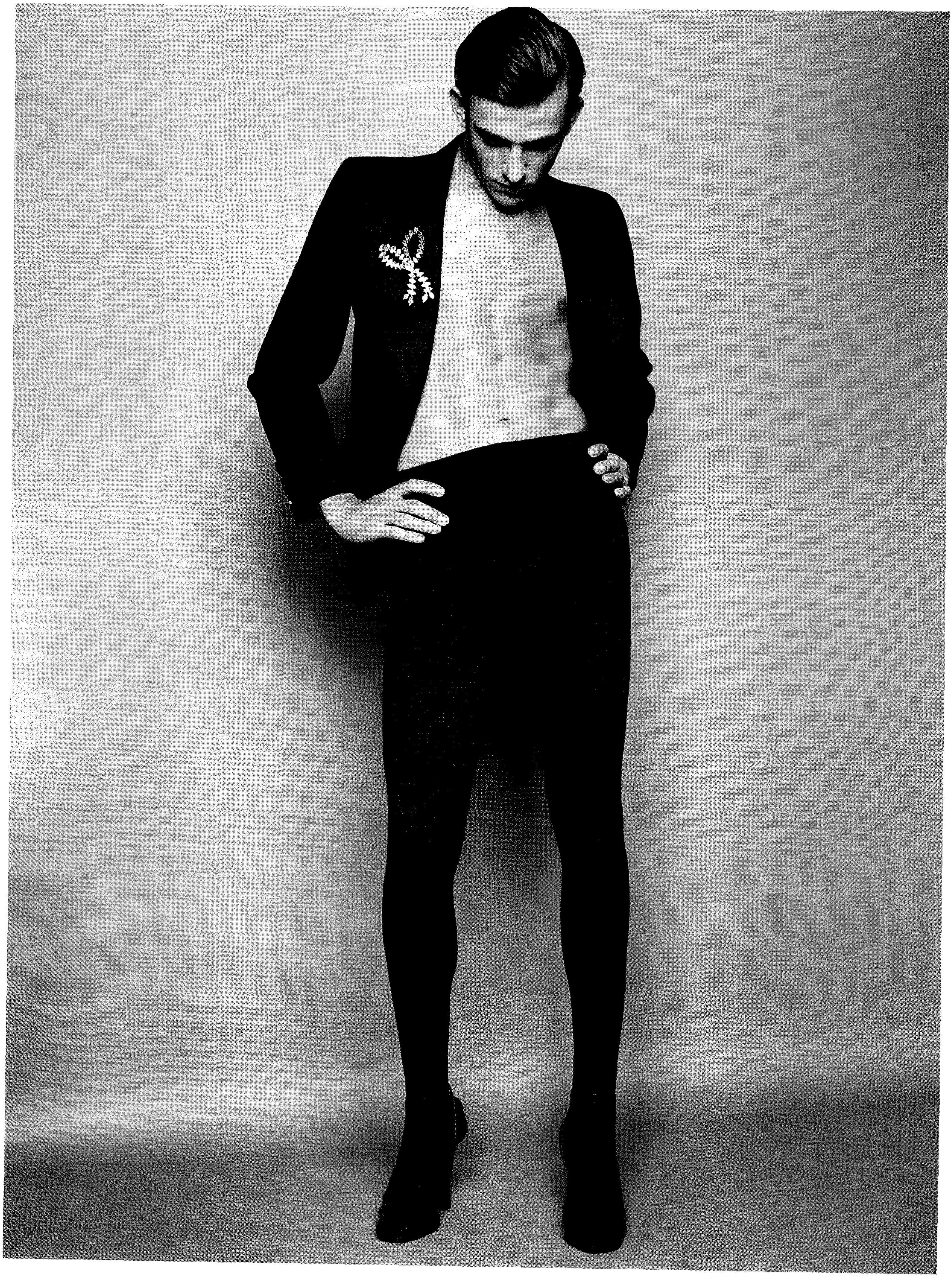
John Dos Passos wrote the truth as he saw it, but his truths were almost entirely political ones—and such truths are all too mutable. He missed the main story, which, as Henry James once described it in "The Princess Casamassima," his one political novel, is about the eternal confusions of human beings: "The figures on the chessboard were still the passions and jealousies and superstitions and stupidities of man, and thus positioned with regard to each other at any given moment could be of interest only to the grim invisible fates who played the game—who sat, through the ages, bow-backed over the table."

Although Dos Passos maintained his outward cheerfulness as he grew older, his views became darker and darker. He somehow lost the artistic energy that once brought life even to the wooden marionettes of his earlier fiction. Nor did his darkening views ever develop into the tragic vision that might have swept him into the

LOOK BOTH WAYS

Androgyny, which was only for the fashion élite when Yves Saint Laurent and Bianca Jagger explored it in the seventies, has since become as socially acceptable as grunge or miniskirted minimalism. It has here been given a photographic spin by Mario Testino, who is a contributor to "The Fashion Special," this month's issue of Visionaire. The publication, founded in 1991 by the fashion photographer and writer Stephen Gan, falls somewhere between "a magazine and an art book," according to Gan's co-editor, the model Cecilia Dean. Each issue presents visual art based on a single subject: the "Black" issue contained drawings by the macabre master Edward Gorey; the "Erotica" issue contained drawings of nude girls and couples from the designer Jean-Paul Goude's private sketchbook. For "The Fashion Special" (which costs seventy-five dollars, at Rizzoli's and museum bookshops), photographers including Testino, Jack Pierson, Larry Fink, and Nan Goldin were asked to interpret current fashion, and their work comes packaged in a canvas-and-leather case designed by Louis Vuitton.

Photograph by Mario Testino



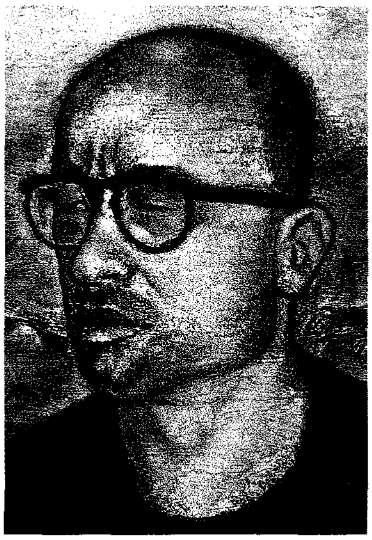
front rank of twentieth-century novelists.

John Dos Passos taught me what politics was about; he gave me a strong conception of what a writer's life ought to be; and he has a permanent place in that small club of writers who not only preached but tried to live by a code of honor and decency. He ignited my passion when I was a boy; he changed my life. In the mysterious way of important books in one's life, his powerful trilogy was there when I needed it. In "U.S.A." he may not have written a book for the ages, but it was a book for his age, and that is no small thing. I—and who knows how many others—shall always be grateful to him. ♦

TUMMY TROUBLE IN TINSELTOWN

A novel of ailing wannabes and has-beens.

BY JOHN UPDIKE



Bruce Wagner

JAMES BURRIS

BRUCE WAGNER knows his Hollywood, and writes like a wizard. His new novel, "I'm Losing You" (Villard; $23), is an inconclusive tangle, but then so is life. Like "Force Majeure," its predecessor of five years ago, "I'm Losing You" deals with the Los Angeles of aspiring losers and contemptible winners, two populations about equally whacked out by drugs, disease, and advanced personal dysfunction. Wagner is a screenwriter ("White Dwarf," "A Nightmare on Elm Street Part Three: Dream Warriors," and "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills") and the author of the television mini-series "Wild Palms"; he thinks in twenty-five-thousand-word bursts and believes in many-levelled plot interweave. The episodes of "Force Majeure" were unified by the winsome persona of Bud Wiggins, an L.A.-reared, thirty-something scriptwriter, a post-modern heir of Scott Fitzgerald's downtrodden scribbler Pat Hobby. "I'm Losing You" has no such continuous hero—just a force field of explosively dissatisfied wannabes and has-beens who appear and disappear like percolating bubbles on a polluted stream.

These people are not well. The novel begins with a seventy-year-old divorcée, Serena Ribkin, lying "bedridden in her frazzled palace with a bad case of colon cancer," and ends with Perry Needham Howe, a producer of a successful television cops-and-robbers show called "Streets," who is enjoying a remission from stage-four adenocarcinoma and contemplating the strange fate of his nine-year-old son, Montgomery; Montgomery, as he was dying, seven years ago, of a "medulloblastoma the size of Children's Hospital," became a savant, keeping perfect time in his head. In the cast of dozens, tied together by glutinous strands of kinship, fornication, and chance encounter, other grim fates include nervous breakdown, suicide, heart attack, syphilis, AIDS, being bitten by one's AIDS-ridden sister, and a disastrously infected root-canal job:

> Bacteria got in the blood, attacking a congenitally weakened valve in her heart. It festered there before unleashing a shower of emboli to effervesce the brainstem, blocking supply of blood to the pons—the area commanding movement. When the tide rolled out, death of tissue left her marooned—"locked-in," went the jargon—a Big Star cognitively undamaged, sensoria intact, dungeoned in a useless body, a catheterized sandcastle princess on a wide dead sea.

This immobilized Big Star is called Oberon Mall. The characters tend to have coined-sounding, Pynchonesque names: Zev Turtletaub, the powerful and sadistic producer; Taj Wiedlin, his abused assistant; Troy Capra, the porn director; Kiv Giraux (once Kim Girard), his sweet and

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hopeful and pregnant star; Stocker Vidra, a lesbian novelist; Ursula Sedgwick, a homeless mother; Chet Stoddard, a former talk-show host; Gina Tolk, a kleptomaniacal masseuse; Moe Trusskopf, a personal manager; Leslie Trott, "fag dermatologist and celebrity adept"; Calliope Krohn-Markowitz, psychiatrist to the mighty. The Ribkins—the dying Serena; her slimy son, Donny, an agent; and her former husband, Bernie, a producer "once semi-famous for a series of zombie films made in the early seventies" and now "desperate to re-enter the Business"—echo, in a harsher key, the nuclear Wiggins configuration in "Force Majeure."

The plots enacted by this colorful mob are not so many: bodies fall apart, relationships go bad, and almost everybody has a script or a movie idea that he or she cannot quite sell. The presence, in the Hollywood community, of global fame and fortunes measured in the hundreds of millions depresses the vast majority who have neither. The masses mill about in the gloom beneath the stars, a few of whom—Holly Hunter, Jodie Foster, Richard Dreyfuss—put a gingerly footstep into the novel's tawdry action; a very stern and extensive disclaimer warns us away from supposing that these "incidental appearances" have anything to do with "the actual conduct of real-life persons." Wagner's verbal animation rarely flags in his grisly tour of broken dreams and metastasizing cancers, but this reader found himself counting the pages left to go in a wasteland so unrelievedly cratered. No character holds center stage for long, and relatively few engage our sympathies. Two old movie hands, Bernie Ribkin and Severin Welch, inspire affection for the tenacity with which they cling to their devious hopes in a recycled Hollywood where they haven't a clue. Welch, a onetime gag writer for Bob Hope, is seventy-six and has been waiting for fifteen years to hear back from Paramount on an adaptation of Gogol's "Dead Souls" which he once submitted; in his cluelessness he has taken to taping the broken, staticky cellular-phone conversations he picks up on his Radio Shack scanner, "scaling heights of cellular Babel." Gina Tolk, besides filching material possessions, appropriates people's energies during her massages, gathering souls into her web with a hilarious, avid poetry: she rubs Donny Ribkin after his mother has died, and feels "the residue of her on him like blue smokey tentacles." Nevertheless, she confides to her journal, "I like his energy; it's orange in hue and looks like kelp—or sleepy eels—floating on the surface of a pinkish coral reef." She is one of the few to whom the sludgy Hollywood scene is not barren but teeming.

Wagner is another triumphant gleaner. His prose, out from under the constraints of script manufacture, writhes and coruscates. His revelry in brand names and film trivia extends to the verge of the present, with allusions to this year's smash movie "Mission: Impossible" and ditto novel "Primary Colors." He loads his sentences to the point of the surreal:

> They were lunching at the Barney Greengrass aerie, on the terrace that overlooked the windswept postcard of Beverly Hills—one of those crisp, automatic days that trigger nostalgic dominoes of déjà vu.

Severin Welch's Beachwood Canyon home is a "low-tech shagscape"; Bernie Ribkin's fat lover, Edie, becomes the homely Eastern city of his childhood:

> It was strange, but something about her, something chalky and carnal, took him back to those whitewashed yards of Baltimore. His cousins' faces floated up as he rode the pale, doughy, mole-flecked country of her flesh, smelled the cooking of ancient neighborhoods in her hair, saw dreary storefronts in the bone beneath her breast.

The dominant metaphor for life in Hollywood is bodily refuse. In a book wherein the religious systems are more sci-fi than orthodox, a page is devoted to the Torah's fine discriminations concerning the uncleanness of menstruation. Corpses, human ("The rabbis called the human corpse 'the father of fathers of impurity' ") and animal, descriptively recur. Stocker Vidra sends her former lover, Katherine Grosseck, a doctor's bag containing her excrement. Ass-kissing, rimming, and buggery are acts and figures of speech in the rings of this foulmouthed hell. "Let us negotiate the amount of *genie shit* you will suck through your pretty little mouth to get there," Zev tells Taj. Vomiting, too, is an expressive act, performable at will; or perhaps this is a somewhat special feature of Wagner's universe. Anyone who can write of "the star-speckled vomitus of the Big Bang" sees a lot in emesis. Zev, having tied Taj blindfolded in a bathtub, "gilded him with throw-up. The producer regurgitated a warm rhythmical hail of egesta." The entirety of "I'm Losing You" is an outpouring of material indigestibly rich, presented in somewhat scattered fashion. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

DERBY DUGAN'S DEPRESSION FUNNIES, by Tom De Haven (Metropolitan; $23). Al Bready, writer for hire (funnies, novels, radio scripts, you name it), looks back on the odd-couple alliances of his hard-time heyday—both with Walter Geebus, the "famous moneybags cartoonist," and with Jewel Rodgers, the maddeningly married teacher who typed Al's manuscripts. Al moves through this wisecracking demimonde of bootleggers, desk clerks, dipsos, and floozies with a Bogey-like code of honor. It suits the era, just as his time-capsule turns of phrase do ("He couldn't get my spunk up. Sticks and stones. Nobody could sore me").

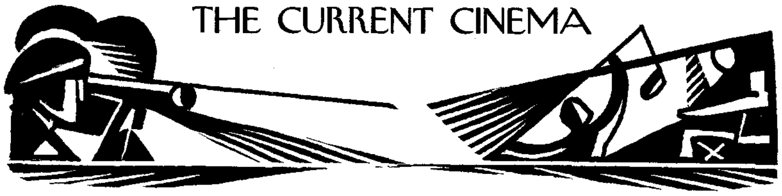
SEEING CALVIN COOLIDGE IN A DREAM, by John Derbyshire (St. Martin's; $22.95). The novel's narrator—a former Red Guard named Chai, who long ago fled his corrupt homeland and now lives happily on Long Island with his wife and child—is in the throes of an obsession with this country's thirtieth President. More dangerous, he is also tempted to revisit a secret romance of his youth. The book contains a trove of satisfying Coolidgeana and the occasional "little nugget of weapons-grade Confucianism," but Derbyshire's great accomplishment is his perceptive and self-deprecating hero. When Chai mentions that during one frozen winter in northeastern China he learned English by memorizing "David Copperfield," the reader is pleasantly unsurprised.

THE SHADOW MAN, by Mary Gordon (Random House; $24). The author's father died when she was seven. Three decades later, Gordon began to discover that most of what she knew by heart about him was fabrication. This knotty, deeply personal book, which is irradiated by flashes of lyric brilliance, tells a specific, shocking story, but it is also a parable about the end of childhood: the moment when we realize that our parents are flawed, elusive, and separate from us.

FIELDS OF BATTLE, by John Keegan (Knopf; $30). The noted military historian demonstrates how North America's geography has influenced its history: how its mountain chains and river systems have determined where people fought, and fought repeatedly. For example, the defenses that Cornwallis built at Yorktown to deter American forces were improved and reused by the Confederates almost a century later. Keegan's tour of the continent skips the Mexican War, and his book is atypically discursive. For Americans, the charm is the familiarity of its sites—Brooklyn, Pittsburgh, Laramie, and other home towns.

CORTÈGE, by Carl Phillips (Graywolf; $12.95). To desire is not to have: this apparent truism pervades Phillips's poems, where the erotic is always lined with sadness. A classicist by training, Phillips mythologizes the everyday as adeptly as he domesticates Ovid, and the verse here is both poised and informal, literate and personal. Not incidentally, many of the poems in this fine collection speak to our own desires in relation to the body's gratifications: "the peril, / the vulnerability / that is all the flesh means to say, / singing."

THE CURRENT CINEMA



THE DUMBING OF EMMA

From the witty women of Austen to the guy slobs of "Kingpin."

BY ANTHONY LANE

THE philosopher Gilbert Ryle was once asked if he ever read novels. "Oh, yes," he replied. "All six of them, every year." To subsist on a diet of nothing but Jane Austen never did anyone any harm, and in Ryle's case it was decidedly beneficial. Goodness knows what he would have made of a year in which four of her six novels have been transformed, with varying degrees of violation, into movies. We have already had "Sense and Sensibility," "Persuasion," a television version of "Pride and Prejudice," and, in the daffy shape of "Clueless," a variation on the theme of "Emma." Now we have the real thing—"Emma," adapted and directed by Douglas McGrath.

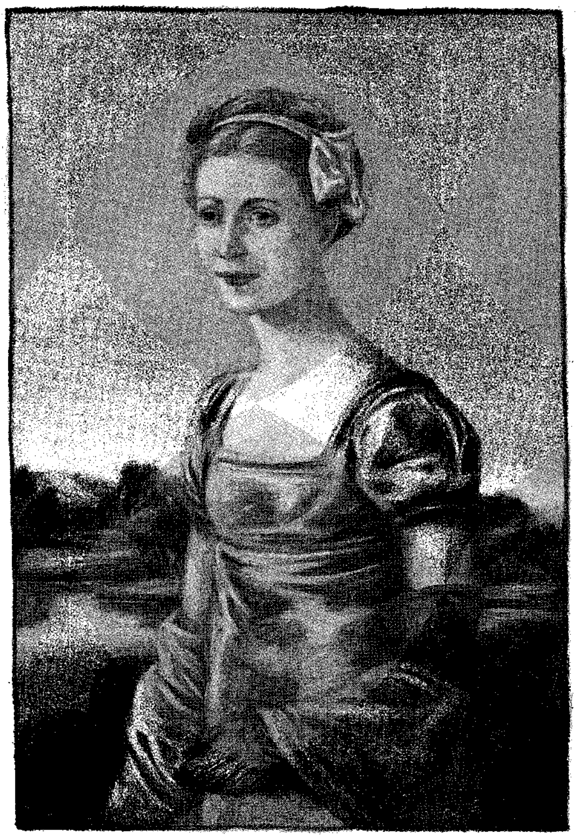
First impressions, at least, suggest that it is real enough. The bones of the story remain unbroken: Emma (Gwyneth Paltrow) is still the perennial matchmaker—busybody or mastermind, according to your point of view—of Highbury. Her efforts to pair off the naïve Harriet Smith (Toni Collette) with the local clergyman, Mr. Elton (Alan Cumming); the shock to her system when the man of God bypasses Harriet with a proposal to Emma herself; the arrival of Frank Churchill, the near-legendary son of Mr. Weston (James Cosmo), who was himself recently hitched to Emma's governess (Greta Scacchi); and the looming presence of Mr. Knightley, older friend to Emma and the apparent source of nothing more than benevolent counsel: all these complications have made it safely from novel to film. They bring with them a trace of that extraordinary sensation—peculiar to Jane Austen and Tolstoy, and to almost no one else—of a narrative that moves like a dance. Immersed in the book, you can never say quite who is in control; Emma thinks that she is leading the way, of course, but it emerges that she is being handed gracefully from one error to the next, from deceit to self-deceit. McGrath certainly gets a measure of this grace into his movie; there are plenty of neat, light-fingered moments when he cuts from the climax of one conversation to the midst of another. His bravado in editing Austen down is almost, though not quite, enough to make you forget his eagerness to bring her up to date. When Emma cries "Good God!," she sounds less like an elegant, Empire-line schemer and more like a busty Betjeman girl being whumped at tennis.

The fact that the movie doesn't always sound like Jane Austen, however, is unlikely to wreck your enjoyment. The more insistent problem is that it doesn't look like Jane Austen; the world that McGrath conjures up has its charms, but it bears only the patchiest relation to the Highbury that was inhabited by the novelist's imagination. The screen is filled with nooks and libraries and fireplaces, with bowers of suspiciously rosy apples, and with a gentle veil of Christmas snow that falls to the sound of "Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly." The whole movie is decked to the hilt; it reminded me not of Austen but of the illustrations you might find on the lids of the cake tins purchased by a coachload of tourists on a day trip to Austen country. In a way, you feel sorry for McGrath and his designers; they have to decide on a tone and stick with it, whereas the atmosphere of the original resists any such definition. You can spend a lifetime reading Austen and still be unable to place her: Is she affectionate or flinty? Does her tolerance float free, or does it exist to peg back her anger? McGrath turns her into a proto-Dickensian—Emma's infuriating father, in particular, becomes a Mr. Bumble figure, all plaintiveness melted into joviality—but there is an equally strong case for revering her as the last of the Johnsonians. No burden weighs more heavily on a writer's shoulders than that of being much loved, but something unreachable in Austen shrugs off the weight. Only a fraction of this ambivalence is available to a film like "Emma"; McGrath has opted to make things nice and snug, but in so doing he dooms us to sit through the movie sighing for the lost astringency of the book.

All of which could plausibly be dismissed as precious and Janeite—as the paranoid desire to protect a literary touchstone at all costs. But no such defensiveness was provoked by "Clueless," which had the wit to hunt around for a modern equivalent of the codified social conditions that prevail in Highbury. Alighting, naturally enough, on Beverly Hills, it proceeded to enjoy its stay within those curious confines, flaunting a wry critical acceptance that took it much closer to the spirit of Jane Austen than anything in McGrath's "Emma." His idea of social edge is to have Knightley proclaim a fondness for home—"It's cozy here"—and at the same time to swing the camera around so that behind Knightley we see the home in question. It's a great chunky pile of a place, and we're supposed to laugh at the absurdity of finding it cozy, but the gag denies us the chance to reach back to a time when those privileged enough to live in high style were also capable, in all sincerity, of feeling at ease there.

Having decided in advance that the hierarchies of Highbury life are a complete joke (they are actually, as Jane Austen realized, a dangerous half joke), the movie prods at them with sub-slapstick. Harriet, for instance, assists Emma on one of her visits to the needy and succeeds only in dropping food all over the floor. This dire bit of stage business obscures Emma's charity, which Austen took pains to emphasize, and merely adds Harriet Smith to the roster of the movie's buffoons—not difficult when Toni Collette (last seen as the heroine of "Muriel's Wedding") has been encouraged throughout to portray the blushing ingénue as a bundle of toothy giggles. The film has the distinction of being miscast right across the board. Sophie Thompson, who did such great work as Anne Elliot's dreadful sister in "Persuasion," is just as funny here, but she is far too young for the kindly, over-the-hill spinsterhood of Miss Bates. Even further under the hill is Jeremy Northam, who is glowering, glamorous, and apparently the same age as Emma. This misses the point of Mr. Knightley, who ought to be openly middle-aged—given the life expectancy of Austen's era, thirty-seven was pretty wrinkled—and avuncular in his attentions right up to the fourth quarter.

Gwyneth Paltrow is the most accomplished young actress in America. There is both bite and languor in her, a finesse that can turn scruffy at will. She can convey anything, in fact, except the moral bossiness of Emma Woodhouse. Her pivotal pang of ruefulness after she insults Miss Bates is beautifully done, and the Paltrow cheekbones would cut a swath through communities far plusher than Highbury, but I never really believed her capable of calculation. This is a serious shortfall, because the plot of "Emma" is artfully constructed around the ethics of plotting: it tells you all about the damage that ensues when natural solicitude shades into an unnatural desire to make short stories out of your friends. And the tale is nothing without that chill; so much of its force springs from a willingness to snatch comedy from the jaws of cruelty. Austen is not vicious and manipulative toward her creations, but she nearly is—and so is Emma, in dealing with her neighbors. Paltrow offers delight, as she should, but she gives it without demur: where is the brainy boredom that drove Miss Woodhouse to meddle?



Gwyneth Paltrow as the meddlesome Miss Woodhouse.

STANISLAS BOUVIER

It could be argued that people who have never read the fiction—the majority of the target audience—will not be bothered by the rights and wrongs of the cast, having nothing to compare it with. But it's worth being picky on their behalf, because they will be denied the available pleasures of the story, and will almost certainly catch a whiff of something rotten. To them, Knightley will so obviously be Emma's main man from the start that the eventual yielding of her heart will seem long overdue; whereas it should come as a genuine tremor, to us as much as to Emma herself. It is not that McGrath's movie makes no sense but that it makes such easy, do-it-yourself sense that you leave the cinema untested and unsurprised—entertained, for sure, but given little inkling of why this Austen dame was so special. The film of "Sense and Sensibility" was reduced, after a couple of viewings, to a similar thinness—to the pleasant sensation of romance. Cinema might fancy that it has trapped Jane Austen where it wants her, but she has got away again.

It was absolutely to be; every preparation was resumed; and very soon after the party repaired to ——— in expectation of a novel diversion.

"It must surely go off tolerably well," said Mr. Woodhouse. "Only, I would not catch cold; if the establishment is damp and dirty, my dear"—(this to his daughter)—"I would chuse not to attend the display; indeed, I cannot be entertained in a draught. I am decided; we shall go to-morrow."

"My dearest papa! I hear nothing but favourable report of the entertainment; it was devised, you know, by a pair of gentlemen—I know them to be gentlemen—a Mr. Farrelly, I believe, and—"

"A Mr. Farrelly again!" Emma was surprized to hear this ejaculation; that it came from the lips of Miss Bates was the cause of further astonishment.

"They are responsible—but what would I know of it—you are so much better advised of these matters than I, Miss Woodhouse; but I fancy that these same brothers—for they are brothers, I am quite sure of it!—pleased us only last year with Dumb—"

"And Dumber!" cried Mr. Elton. The consternation that greeted this addition to the exchange was the greatest yet. Mr. Elton confessed that he had taken a chaise to London with no other purpose than to extend his already large acquaintance with the achievements of those gentlemen; that he had observed Dumb, &c; and that an equal gratification was to be had from—

"Kingpin!" said Miss Bates, very fast. At least, she believed so—it was something like; at least, there were kings, and pins—or bobbins—

"Ah! Miss Bates is not mistaken," said Mr. Elton. "No doubt, Ma'am, you know also that Mr. Harrelson and Mr. Quaid—Mr. Randolph Quaid, I should say, rather than *his* brother—are the players."

The company was far from disinclined to hear more; and Mr. Elton, whose refinement of expression was complemented by a most unsullied cordiality, spoke to them of bowling with ten pins; of the misfortune that was visited upon Mr. Harrelson in the losing of his arm; and of the ardent and uncouth intentions on the part of Mr. William Murray to impede the happiness that was both prized and merited by the heroes of the piece.

"I own that the Picture is less diverting than I had hitherto heard tell," concluded he. "If the intent was to raise the humour of those present, the result was quite other—a lowering of the spirits, indeed, and a considerable measure of disgust; and yet, it is commonly said that the Picture wants nothing in its likeness of middle-America."

Emma could not resist. "And I declare it as common as anything I ever saw!" she said rather warmly. "That is—I have *not* seen it; and would not, Sir; and as for the Americas having a middle, why, I am scarce persuaded that they have a beginning or an end."

Mr. Elton was grieved; he was sensible of being the occasion of much mortification; but Emma demanded no apology. She was pondering upon the imminent event—and, it must be allowed, upon the presence of Mr. Knightley. Was it not that gentleman who had made her a gift of the Pop-corn in a similar circumstance? Was it not he who had felt so nice a concern for her pleasure that he had shewn her the works of Mr. Ace Ventura himself? ◆

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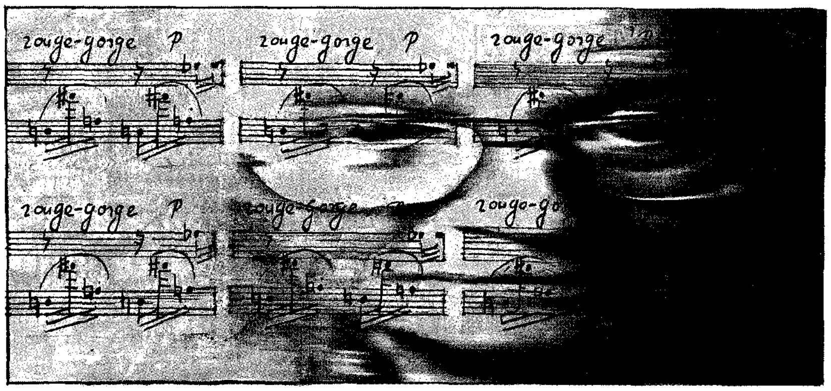
MUSICAL EVENTS

ESSENTIAL MESSIAEN

An introduction to the composer on disk.

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON displeased one of its star conductors, Claudio Abbado, by gathering together the slow movements from his recordings of Mahler symphonies to make an album of adagios. A similar exercise with Messiaen's music, lately issued as "Mystic," has the blessing of the conductor concerned, Myung-Whun Chung, but still evokes concerns over propriety. Evidently, we're unsettled about whether presenting music in any form other than the complete work can be justified. Recording gives us the opportunity to program music in all kinds of ways, and yet the standard we most often set is that of the scholarly edition, as if we were afraid of freedom and had to bind ourselves to the strictest ideal. Why? Perhaps because we consider faithfulness to an external criterion—that of the unimpeachable identity of the work—the only bar we have against commercial abuses of music. Let that go, the feeling seems to be, and classical music will instantly become a field to nourish the horses of the barbarians—the barbarians who will descend to pick and choose and reassemble whatever will sell.



Messiaen: explosions of color and strangeness within a comfortable style.

But this caution may be too nice. Record companies have a long way to go before they come near the venality and opportunism that music publishers and impresarios regularly showed two hundred years ago in cutting, rearranging, and misattributing their wares. Also, there can be no objection in principle to the practice of anthologizing excerpts—especially when, as in the Messiaen case, purchasers are guided toward the complete works. Extracts will surely help the music find new listeners, and the tricky combination of educative and commercial motives is something that any business in the cultural sphere has to cope with. The most important questions to ask—questions that may reveal where the balance of motives lies—are whether the anthology has any justification in artistic terms, and whether the music is being misrepresented.

This is where one might start to feel genuinely uneasy about the "Mystic" enterprise. The choice of music is heavily weighted toward Messiaen's earlier works: of the nine tracks, all but two were written when the composer was forty or under (he lived to be eighty-three), and, of those two, one is an arrangement of a piece from his youthful period. Anyone coming new to Messiaen's music would find little evidence of the explosion of color and strangeness—not to mention other quarks—that he bravely let loose within the relatively comfortable style he had developed by the middle of his life: the color and strangeness that came from his listening to non-European music, to the younger composers who had been his pupils (especially Boulez and Stockhausen), and to the songs of birds.

Not only is the "Mystic" selection slanted toward a particular phase of Messiaen's music; it also seems to want to find in him a particular kind of composer. Most of the music here is slow, and, indeed, Messiaen was a master of the long breath—of string melodies that play on and on, of harmonies that remain without change, of forms that repeat. Yet he was also a master of rush and sudden change, and—as the writers of the "Mystic" booklet notes are well aware—his music's variety of speed and tone is part of what makes it special. Along with contemplative slow movements, his musical world embraced expressions of joy, panic, and even rage as part of the religious experience. The truths with which he was concerned, he once said, are "in turn mysterious, harrowing, glorious, and sometimes terrifying"—terrifying in themselves (as many of the things told in the Apocalypse tend to be), and terrifying in the demands they impose. Messiaen's implacable text setting in his choral work "La Transfiguration," for example, manifests affirmation and emphasis, to be sure, but also something like desperation that these words must be uttered and heard.

This may not have been his intention. He said himself that he was born with faith and never had any doubts; all his music was therefore composed from a certain viewpoint. But to those of us who hear it from somewhere else the effect may be otherwise, and what was created in utter simplicity may come across as decidedly weird. For instance, in the middle movement of his "Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum"—monumentally scored for full symphonic wind and brass, with bells and gongs—the voice of Christ is represented by the call of an Amazonian bird, by a pattern of change ringing on the bells, and by a massive crescendo on a sustained chord. There's no "Gentle Jesus" here, or any anxiety about good taste. In Messiaen's music, there simply is no decorum. If the image was right, it would be used, no matter where it came from—the forests of the Amazon or, in the case of his most succulent harmonies, the cafés of prewar Paris. One important fault of the DG program is that it confines this unashamed heterodoxy.

Messiaen himself might have objected also to the "Mystic" label. His music came, he insisted, not from visionary experience but out of a conscious, considered, and unfettered effort to transcribe into sound the imagery of Christian sacred texts and Catholic theology. He wanted to make stories and patterns in music, just as the master glaziers of Chartres or the Sainte-Chapelle made stories and patterns in light, or just as the illuminators of medieval Gospel books made stories and patterns in paint and gold. Of course, the subjects of art are not delimiting, and Messiaen must have been aware that his music was revered by many people—in Japan, for instance—for whom the theology of the Incarnation was not even part of their cultural heritage. From where he stood as a composer, though, there really was no alternative view: nearly every movement in nearly every work was illustration and (because he was no realist) symbol.

If the "Mystic" record nevertheless provides a point of entry, other recent releases will be needed in order to reveal the many and various splendors of Messiaen's musical world—beginning with two of the recordings from which "Mystic" tracks are taken. One is Mr. Chung's version of the huge last work, commissioned by the Philharmonic and given its unforgettable first performances by the orchestra in 1992: "Éclairs sur l'Au-Delà," or "Glimpses of the Beyond." The first movement could be slower, but the performance generally is majestic, luminous, and beautiful; the only other recording of this piece, by a Polish orchestra, has the single virtue that it includes the full texts of the notes by the composer's widow, Yvonne Loriod. Also to be recommended—for the passion and vitality that seem inherent in the music, essential to what it is, not to how it's performed—is Mr. Chung's recording of the "Turangalîla" Symphony, of 1946-48, the major work that closed the first part of the composer's career.

After those two works, the essential Messiaen would probably not include, except as a memento, the compilation on EMI of his own recordings of his organ music, made in 1956 at La Trinité, the church in Paris he served for sixty years. He was not a great performer—though two recordings he made as a pianist (of his rapturous song cycle "Poèmes pour Mi," with Lise Arséguet, and of his "Quatre Études de Rythme") deserve to be put back in circulation. Thinking comparatively little of his gifts as a pianist, he wrote most of his piano music for Mme. Loriod, and charmingly devised the two-piano work "Visions de l'Amen" for their dissimilar talents. Mme. Loriod's name inevitably recurs often in the Messiaen discography: she plays the piano-solo part in "Turangalîla" under Mr. Chung, for instance, as she did in several other recordings of the work, and her versions have to be taken into account. However, there's a spectacular new recording of the first solo work Messiaen wrote for his future wife, "Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus" (1944), by Joanna MacGregor, on the Collins label. A whole piano recital between two covers (with only Alkan and Sorabji as possible models for such a conception), "Vingt Regards" was Messiaen's longest work until the succession of sacred concerts he completed during his last quarter-century, and Ms. MacGregor has the precision, the wide spectrum of color, the intensity, and the resolution it needs.

Among conductors, besides Mr. Chung, Pierre Boulez has an important place, not least for his recording of "Chronochromie"—a riot of orchestrally amplified birdsongs, written in 1959-60. This is also on DG, coupled with "Et exspecto" and a late work for piano and orchestra, "La Ville d'en Haut," which could almost have been a movement for the "Éclairs." However, I'm not sure anyone has found all the measures of Messiaen's music—the suspension and the drive, the dance and the awesomeness—quite so well as Reinbert De Leeuw in recordings for Montaigne of two concert-length works the composer completed in his sixties: "La Transfiguration" and "Des Canyons aux Étoiles." The latter—another New York commission, prompted by Alice Tully—is perhaps no more than the sum of its magnificent parts: images, for piano and small orchestra, of birds, of stars, and of the rocks of Utah. But "La Transfiguration," commenting on a Gospel story that incorporates favorite Messiaen elements of mountain heights, light, and the divine presence, is a glorious work, and glorious here it sounds. ◆

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

THE RETURN OF BAAL

BY JOHN SEABROOK

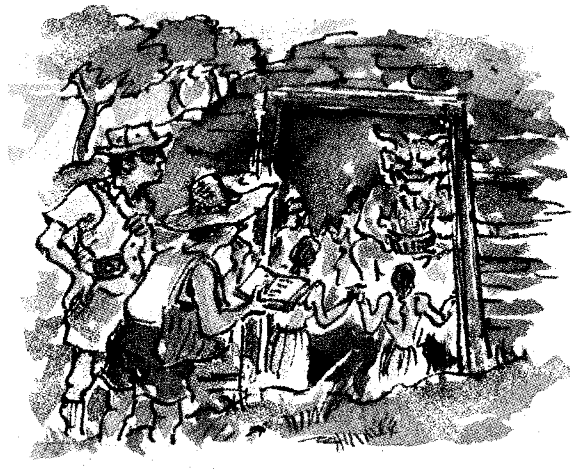
SOME years ago, a man named Warren Dexter stopped by our family's vacation home in Vermont and asked if he could take a picture of the root cellar, which is next to the house. He told my mother that, according to a book by someone named Dr. Barry Fell, a marine biologist at Harvard University, the root cellar was actually an ancient temple built by Baal-worshipping Celts who crossed the ocean around 800 B.C., sailed up the Connecticut River, and colonized the Green Mountains. Dexter pointed to a spot on the stone lintel where, he said, you could make out the word "Baal" carved into the rock in the ancient Celtic alphabet of "vowelless Ogam." "He seemed like a perfectly nice man," my mother reported later, and did not appear to her to be a Baal worshipper himself (although one never really knows), but rather a Wasp retiree trying to stay active with a hobby that got him out in the countryside.

Since that first, seemingly innocent appearance by Dexter, each summer has brought more and more visitors to our door asking to inspect "the site"—or, sometimes, "the Baal chamber." They have become a bit of a nuisance. Crazed squirrels, old liens, damp basements, ghosts—all these are to be anticipated when one acquires an old house in the country, but one does not expect it to become a mecca for believers in a nutty theory about ancient Baal-worshipping Celts. In New England, though, where old stone structures like ours have been a source of folkloric speculation for hundreds of years—John Pynchon wrote to John Winthrop, Jr., in 1654, about "a report of a stone wall and strong chamber in it, made all of stone, which is newly discovered at or near Pequot; I should be glad to know the truth of this from yourself, here being many strange reports about it"—the theory of pre-Columbian settlers has found a modern audience. When the retired Episcopalian rector who lives up the hill from us is asked by strangers if he happens to know where the Baal chamber is, he likes to reply, "Oh, you mean the root cellar," which sometimes causes people to chuckle knowingly and say, "Oh, yes, the *root cellar*."

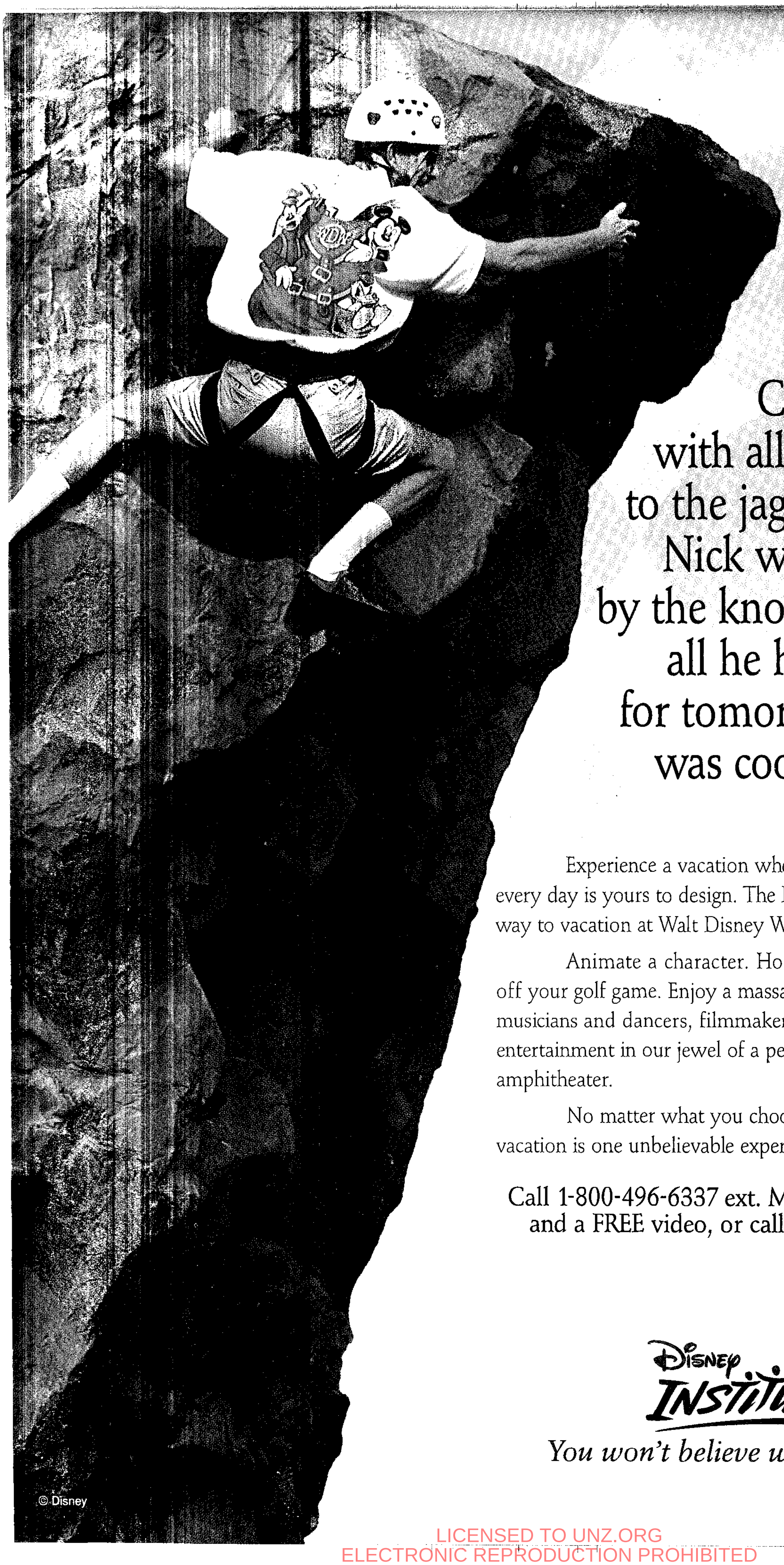
Dexter returned last summer to give us a copy of his own book, "America's Ancient Stone Relics," which includes a nice picture of our root cellar. Weekend guests who discover this book in the house are soon overcome with curiosity; they leave the reading they brought with them and take the book to their room at night. The next day, I'll see them outside in front of the root cellar, looking for Baal's name on the lintel. Dinnertime is full of speculation about how the heck Baal—a fertility god revered by the Canaanites and considered a false deity by the Hebrews—came to be worshipped by Celts, and also about what druidic rites might have been performed in the Baal chamber. (Orgies and human sacrifice are the most popular suggestions.) I try to defend what one of Fell's followers has scornfully called the "root-cellar mind-set," explaining that the idea of ancient Celts settling in Vermont has been dismissed as "ignorant rubbish" by one scholar and that no professional archeologist has ever endorsed it, but just when I think I have laid the subject to rest someone will say, "What I don't understand is why a people who wrote in vowelless Ogam would worship a god with two vowels *right in the middle of his name*," and away we go again. The whole idea appears to be an irresistible tonic of mystery in the urbanite weekender's life.

Meanwhile, believers continue to produce pagan "finds" all around us. On and around the hill next to ours they have found so many anatomically suggestive stones—including "animated stone phalli," "testicle stones," a "yoni," two "lingas" with Ogam inscriptions reading "Sprinkle the Chimney" and "For the Loins of Byanu," and a stone depression that according to Fell represents "two matched pairs of human buttocks"—that they have named the place Phallus Hill. When I told the rector about this recently, he looked at me in silence for several seconds, then said only, "That's nice."

But what I object to most about all of this is that the ancient Celts seem to have intruded on my own mental geography. In proposing a woodland walk to a friend, I find myself saying, "Let's go by the Bride of Baal's chamber"—that being another site in the area, at the base of Phallus Hill. The mossy stone walls in the woods no longer evoke Robert Frost's poetry for me; now all I see are animated stone phalli. One chilly night not long ago, while poking at the fire, my wife said, "Hey, John, look! The face of Baal!" And, sure enough, there the old god was, in the burning logs, with a short, curled beard of ash. ♦



HANK BLAUSTEIN



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Clinging with all his strength to the jagged rock, Nick was comforted by the knowledge that all he had scheduled for tomorrow was cooking class.

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